UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Men and Masculinities in Selected Ghanaian Video Films

By

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The videos may not give us what we thought we wanted, but there are good reasons to pay attention to them. [...] They are a prime instance of the interpenetration of the global and the local through the international commerce of cultural forms – which one can claim without fear of exaggeration is, for better or worse, a crucial event in human history. And they are a prime instance of African modernity, a concept that has been growing in interest and importance even as it has lost the clarity it once appeared to have in the days of a nearly universal belief in "modernization." (Jonathan Haynes 4)

A man once said, "There is nothing more complex than a woman!" He was wrong. Men are every bit as complicated as the fairer sex. We tend to preserve the strange notion that a man is open, candid, perceptible, and easily understood. That is nonsense! Men are just as mysterious as women, but they hide their complexity behind the impenetrable mask of their masculinity. (Tim Lahaye 13)

Masculinity is not inherited nor is it acquired in a one-off way. It is constructed in the context of class, race, and other forms which are interpreted through the prism of age. Boys develop a masculine gender identity which is deficient relative to the adult masculinity of men. The stages by which boys become men – manhood – are a source of anxiety and a rite of passage. There is no set or prescribed procedure but the determination to become 'a man' is a powerful feature of masculinity. . . (Robert Morrell 8)

To put it bluntly, we men need one another. And the sad reality is that most of us aren't in touch with this need because it makes us feel so uncomfortable, so needy, so afraid of being vulnerable and ending up hurt – like being the last one picked at recess for the team – that we bury it and suffer our masculine journeys alone in silence. As we grow up, we grow apart, believing that autonomy is part of masculinity. But the sad truth is we live our lives in a solitary confinement that imprisons the masculine soul. (T. D. Jakes 149)

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of these great people:

Nichodemus Maxwell Coffie Agorde
1932—2005
(My Father)

Esther Amy Mawusi Ama Kulor
January 29, 1938— January 22, 2008
(My Mother)

Grace Ama Nkansah
May 28, 1960 - July 23, 2008
(PK's Mother)

ABSTRACT

My dissertation examines how Ghanaian video films write men and masculinities by addressing how the films portray what it means to be a man in contemporary Ghana. Exploring the cultural ideas and expectations regarding masculinity as constructed by Ghanaian filmmakers, this project identifies the different institutions that encourage particular philosophies of masculinity and the kinds of environments that such institutions create for the performance of gender relations and identities. Drawing upon theories of men and masculinities from both Africa and the West, individual chapters demonstrate that Ghanaian men are not a unified or a homogeneous group. There is no singular concept of masculinity, only different versions of masculinity that continues to shift perspectives. I argue that men and masculinities in the films are constructed, shaped, and maintained from diverse perspectives; these include traditional cultural practices, community standards, and foreign concepts imposed upon the country due to missionary activities and colonialism. The video films thereby mediate life experiences of common people and show how urbanization plays a vital role in post-colonial Ghana.

The Introduction deals with the historical origin of the video films, which is located in cultural and political contexts. It points to some of the crucial links which this popular medium has with theories of masculinity. Chapter One examines representations of men in rural Ghana exploring the duties of the father as custodian of family traditions and property, and as economic provider. The discussion critiques the relationship between fathers and sons and the familial positions of wives and daughters. Using Christian theology and theories of Christian masculinities, Chapter Two analyzes the influence of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian movement on video films, and examines representations of the born-again Christian father at home, church and work. Chapter Three investigates the sexual practices of men who use sexual virility as a means of

proving their masculinity and points to how masculinity is destroyed through the HIV. By extending Michael Kaufman's triad of men's violences to include violence against young people within the family unit, Chapter Four examines how men's violences are represented in video films, and provides a critique of how men use violence to assert their masculinities. The Conclusion to this project re-visits some of the main argument in this dissertation in order to help clarify some of the discussions made in the various chapters.

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The realization of this study, including the identification of the topic was made possible by Dr. Lahoucine Ouzgane who introduced me to the study of men and masculinities. He greatly supported and encouraged me when I expressed the interest of writing my PhD dissertation on Ghanaian masculinities. I thank him for his effort, involvement and support. This is a great opportunity to express my respect to my supervisor Dr. Onookome Okome; this person has provided me with the necessary assistance and carefully guided me through the whole process. I had the privilege and the opportunity of working with a real teacher and a great man. His involvement with his originality has triggered and nourished my intellectual maturity that I will benefit from, for a long time to come.

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INTRODUCTION

> *The new phenomenon of video-films, as they are popularly known, constitutes unique cultural art while remaining true to its objective – commercial viability. The explosion of video production and its popular appeal in the Anglophone countries of West Africa attests to the manifestation of what might be called a real 'first' cinema. Video's triumph does not necessarily imply the displacement of the celluloid film medium, but rather the transcendence of the limitations imposed by the convections of celluloid film making.* (Ukadike 243)

> *The emergence of the video films has an entirely different social, political, and historical character from that of African cinema. A local, popular, and commercially based phenomenon, it has been unheralded on the international level, with no ringing manifestos, no excited late-night conversations in Parisian cafés, no invitations to film festivals in newly liberated capitals, not even screenings organized by African-American academic programs. So far the video films have produced no masterpieces or major directors ready to triumph at world festivals in Venice or Berlin or Cannes.* (Haynes 5)

> *Definitions of African masculinities are not uniform and monolithic, not generalizable to all men in Africa, and [...] masculine behaviors in Africa are not natural or unchanging – suggesting the possible emergence of new (and less violent and less oppressive) ways of being masculine.* (Ouzgane and Morrell 8-9)

Ghanaian Movies: A Brief History

This dissertation is about how Ghanaian video films write men and masculinities. The project views men and masculinities through the lens of gender studies by analyzing the content of a popular art form – video film. Men and masculinities in Ghanaian films are deployed through different institutions that encourage particular philosophies of masculinity. Discussions in the individual chapters are heavily influenced by theories of men and masculinity studies from both Africa and the West. A major component of this dissertation

identifies and explores the different institutions that promote particular masculine ideas and the kinds of environments that such institutions create for the performance of gender relations and identities. The project explores how Ghanaian video filmmakers reinforce gender hierarchy and the various ways masculinities are represented.

The primary aim of this introduction is to locate both the presence of the Ghanaian video film in the cultural life of Ghanaians, and to show how it may be possible to elicit the many cultural trajectories of the meaning of masculinity in contemporary Ghanaian society. By tracing the historical origin of the video film, and locating it within particular cultural and political contexts, I point to the crucial links between the medium and theories of masculinity.

The discussion begins with a brief history of Ghanaian films from the colonial period to the present. In 1940, the Information Services Department of the colonial government started using film to spread propaganda about the Second World War. The Colonial Film Unit used green-yellow Bedford buses throughout the colony, gathering people at open spaces where documentary films and newsreels were screened to explain the policies of the colonial government to the people free of charge (Sakyi). The unit proceeded to produce educational films after the war, and these films were screened throughout the British colonies of Africa.

Film production in Ghana started in 1948 with the establishment of the first West African Film School in Accra by the British Colonial authorities. Educational and entertainment films were produced and distributed within and outside the country. Though the Gold Coast Film was established to produce films containing themes that were relevant to the citizens in the colony, the focus was on serving colonial interest rather than the locals. The films emphasized the need for people to change their behaviour and accept Western lifestyle. During the day, cinema vans with loudspeakers toured the countryside to advertise the next film that was going to be shown later in the day. In the evening, a big screen was erected, benches were arranged at the open space, a generator was used to provide power and the audience was shown varieties of educational films with entertainment spots in between. Local instructors gave interpretations of the films in the local languages. In the absence of electricity, "and far away from the big city, film shows were major events celebrating the superiority of Western technology. Literally bringing light to the dark. . ." (Meyer, "Ghanaian Popular Cinema"). Some of the films produced included *Jaguar High Life* and *Freedom for Ghana. The Boy Kumasenu,* produced in 1952, was considered the biggest success at that time, and was well received in both Ghana and England.

After Ghana's independence in 1957, this cultural institution was integrated into the nation's cultural policy, thereby making film an important

aspect of the nation's development and an important tool for entertainment. The Gold Coast Film Unit metamorphosed into the Ghana Film Industry Corporation (GFIC). The GFIC was founded by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, and was used to propagate his image and accomplishments to the nation. Nkrumah saw the importance of film making in Ghana, so he established the southern studios in Accra, and put together technical equipment in advanced film production. Nkrumah's concern was not for Ghana alone, but for the continent of Africa as a whole, because he saw film as an effective tool that could speed up the cultural and political development of the continent as well as create an impact in the decolonization process of the continent. He encouraged the production of films that dealt with the emergence of Africa as an independent continent. During his regime, editing studios and processing laboratories were built, and Ghana soon became the only country in Africa with the most sophisticated infrastructure for film production in Africa at that time (Anyidoho 306). However, when Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966, the new government officials who believed these films promoted Nkrumah's ideas and policies declared all the films produced during the Nkrumah regime illegal.

New production policies were set up when Sam Aryetey was appointed head of GFIC in 1969. Aryetey, who was a director and editor, graduated from the Accra Training School in 1949. When he took over the GFIC, there was

enough technical equipment and personnel to produce at least a dozen films a year. Apart from Ghana possessing the best technical equipment in tropical Africa, the film corporation "could also draw upon the expertise of Ghanaian technicians trained in Accra and London, and there were already ten Ghanaian film directors" (Diawara 6). In spite of the availability of both technical equipment and manpower, the country produced very few feature films. Rather than engaging Ghanaian film directors, Aryetey depended on foreign directors to produce Ghanaian films because he aimed at distributing those films outside Africa. There was no provision made to make sure that the films produced reached the local people. Aryetey signed a contract with Giorgio Bontempi, an Italian film director, to produce *Impact* in 1975; this turned out to be a failure and caused a huge financial loss to the country because very few Ghanaians saw the film. Aryetey's dependence on foreigners to play key roles in film production in the country made the industry dependent on foreigners, thereby continuing the trend of the colonizer's reliance on the colonial master. There were very few locally made movies, so the only films shown at cinemas and video-theatres were action movies from America, horror films, Indian epic films, and Kung Fu films.

Considering the technical and manpower resources available for film production in Ghana, lack of foresight and continuous dependence on foreign filmmakers were the major setbacks that plagued the industry. It was more

expensive for the country to depend on foreigners for film production, since they were paid in foreign currency and by foreign standards. Moreover, these outsiders had little knowledge of African cultural values which led to misrepresentations of the customs of the people. The failure of GFIC to excel in film production is without excuse, because the training students received from the Accra Film School made them technically competent in editing and laboratory skills to handle the technical and manpower needs of the industry. Also, there was a vibrant audience to consume the movies.

Because some filmmakers realized that the dependence on government for film production would not enhance the effective growth of the film industry, they started their own independent productions. Kwaw Ansah and King Ampaw, both independent directors, were the pioneers who led this venture. Kwaw Ansah's first major feature film, *Love Brewed in the African Pot,* was produced in 1980. *Love Brewed* became an instant hit. It was also successful in other African countries, including Zimbabwe, Zambia, Sierra Leone, and Kenya. Kwaw Ansah also produced *Heritage Africa* in 1987, but *Heritage* did not enjoy the same financial success as *Love Brewed,* due partly to piracy. King Ampaw produced *Kukurantumi: The Road to Accra* in 1983.

Ghanaian Video Films: A Brief History

The production of low budget video films started in Ghana in late 1980s, resulting in the release of many video films in English and other local languages. The emergence of the video film tradition became inevitable when the state-owned GFIC could not produce films due to lack of funds. The tradition of video film production started with people who had no training in the art of film making. Their lack of professional training is manifested in the way conventions regarding script writing, theme, and overall message were not given any professional attention. Also, technical issues were ignored, as the films were shot with super-VHS cameras, with most feature films shot within one to three weeks on a budget of $5,000 to $15,000. In order to cut down the cost of production, many producers wrote the scripts, directed the production, and sometimes played the lead role in the films. The scripts were brief outlines, which usually left room for actors to create the story. In addition, the majority of the actors involved in the productions had no professional training in acting so they did it simply for their love for acting, and were excited to appear on video film. These actors were paid little money, thus, it cannot be said that they were involved in the acting solely for monetary gain. In spite of the imperfection of these films, and the conspicuous technical flaws, they were box office hits. They competed with foreign films from North America, Asia, and Europe. As more video films were produced, most cinemas in the big cities like

Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi showed fewer foreign movies; weekends and holidays were solely reserved for the screening of Ghanaian films.

William Akuffo ushered in the video film industry in Ghana when he directed *Zinabu* for Worldwide Motion Pictures in 1987. Two films were made the following year, four films came out in 1990, and by 1993, close to fifty more were exhibited (Sutherland-Addy). Currently, more than fifty video films are produced every year. Birgit Meyer observes that the "emergence of video technology clearly marked the beginning of a mass media revolution which made it increasingly difficult for the nation state to control the consumption of images by its subjects" ("Popular Ghanaian Cinema" 97). The boom of video films brought a halt to GFIC's monopoly over film production in the country. However, aware of the power of visual images, the government tried to put a number of regulations in place to monitor the production and consumption of video films. The Ministry of Information, in conjunction with filmmakers, put together a *Draft of the National Film and Video Policy for Ghana* in 1995. Among other things, the policy demanded that TV stations in the country devote forty percent of their transmission time to local productions. It also encouraged the formation of an association of filmmakers and exhibitors to facilitate effective distribution of local productions to all parts of the country. The draft recognized the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) as the main training institution for professionals in the film industry. The new policy

demanded that Ghanaian films align with "Ghanaian traditions and mores and promote desirable aspects of Ghanaian culture", including "the extensive use of authentic national cultural forms and symbols." It further required filmmakers to "establish the common identity and shared interests of all African and black peoples and cultures everywhere" (150). The GFIC was charged with the responsibility to ensure that films produced in the country are censored before they are screened at movie theatres. Meyer itemizes some of the main restrictions which include: "the depiction of sex, violence, burglary, racist prejudice, ridiculization of minority groups and religion, and bad treatment of women" ("Popular Ghanaian Cinema" 99). If it becomes necessary for any of the above actions to be depicted in order to develop the plot, it is required that such scenes be very brief. The censorship board "acts not only as a guardian of moral standards, but also wields considerable influence on the construction of film narratives which are required to punish the bad [characters] in the end (a requirement in line with traditional story telling)" (Meyer, "Popular Ghanaian Cinema" 99). The GFIC also urges the government to put restrictions on the number of foreign films that can be imported into the country, and encourages the exchange of films between Ghana and other developing countries.

In November 1996, an agreement was signed between the government of Ghana and the government of Malaysia. Seventy percent of the shares of the GFIC were sold to Sistem Televisyen Malaysia Berhad of Kuala Lumpur,

transforming GFIC into Gama Media System Ltd. The company has a film production division, Gama Film Company (GFC), and a television unit, TV3. This step by the Ghanaian government brought high hopes to those in the film industry, but after a number of years, enthusiasm died, as the situation concerning film production had not changed much. During a research trip to Ghana in 1998, Meyer "encountered much bitterness among (former) GFIC personnel, who complained about the difficulties of communicating with the Malaysian leadership in charge of TV3 and GFC. They deplored that this sale entailed the end of 'real film' in Ghana" ("Money & Power" 69). Filmmakers thought that with the new administration, they would be able to produce celluloid films and represent Ghana on the international scene, but their hopes never materialized. Former employees of GFIC are therefore compelled to make video films that will do well commercially, "rather than making films that echo national cultural policies with regard to tradition and development (Meyer, "Power & Money" 69). However, the sale of the GFIC brought an end to what was called the "Nkrumah propaganda machine," opening the way for mainline filmmakers to explore immediate issues like corruption among the police and government functionaries, labour conflicts, and drug trafficking. The GFC has also adopted new viewpoints concerning issues of witchcraft and juju, which led to the production of *Dark Sands* and *Namisha.* These topics were frowned upon, and those films would not have been produced under the GFIC.

Ghanaian Video Films: The Genre

This section of the chapter draws on Karin Barber's "Popular Arts in Africa" to contextualize Ghanaian video films in relation to other popular art forms in the country. Barber observes it is important to give serious attention to popular arts because they are social facts. They are important in the lives of large numbers of African people who take on the production of these arts, sometimes without observing the rules and regulations set by official cultural bodies. In many instances, popular arts are not sponsored by government and publicized through its official organs. More often than not, they are "disregarded by the formal educational apparatus" (Barber 11). It is essential to note that Ghanaian video films started from the "grassroots behind the backs of Hollywood and the global media industry" (Meyer, "Popular Ghanaian Cinema" 98). It is therefore not surprising that the production of video films in Ghana initially met with resistance from professional filmmakers. They viewed the video film productions with scepticism, and vehemently criticized the initiatives taken by non-professionals in the field of audio-visual productions. However, doubts expressed by these professional filmmakers were unfounded, because these films created a vibrant audience, making it possible for the sustenance of the video film industry. The productions met with such success, and it became clear that using the medium of video for film production has a great potential for sustaining a feasible audio-visual industry in the country. When the films were

screened in local film houses, enough money was generated to sustain the industry. Taking note of the success of video films, the GFIC offered free editing services to the producers on condition that the films would first be premiered in GFIC-owned cinema houses in Accra. By the late 1990s, private production networks such as Sidiku Buare, Alexiboat Productions, Princess Films, and Miracle Films entered the trade, resulting in the production of many videos each year.

The success of video film production can be attributed to the fact that it is an expressive art form that devises new ways of looking at everyday life. Closely examining the films as social facts in the way they are produced and consumed reveals relevant parts of society that are important to both producers and consumers. The stories have very simple plot lines with little or no room for ambiguity. Discussing popular writing in Ghana, Richard Priebe comments that the "common people have little time for complexity in their literature; in fact, when they look at literature they try to find resolution for the complexities of life. Thus the world of the popular is often an unambiguous world where good is rewarded and evil is punished" (87). What Priebe observes is a common theme in all popular arts forms in Ghana. The films are not embellished with esoteric euphemisms and allegories, but rather carry simple messages that are easily understood by viewers. The films appeal to people of middle and lower classes in the urban centres. The narratives deal with the experiences of these

people who are struggling to make a living in the city. The majority of the filmmakers belong to the middle or lower classes, and thus, they are able to give accurate representations of the challenges of everyday life.

The filmmakers depend on audience reception in order to make a profit, so they deal with themes that appeal to audiences rather than expressing their artistic opinions. The video films "focus on people's struggles against the visible and invisible forces that are held to make life so tremendously difficult" (Meyer, "Popular Ghanaian Cinema" 94). They make it possible for audiences to ponder over their lives, and at the same time mediate between their ambitions and experiences in the postcolonial city. The films are therefore concerned with the importance of hard work to earn an honest living. Many of them focus on the illegal acquisition of money, which always leads to the downfall of apparently successful men in the films. Commenting on the commercial nature of Nigerian video productions, Onookome Okome observes that "the practitioners and producers often appeal to popular sentiments, almost frantically avoiding controversial aspects of the nation's political, cultural and social life" ("Video Film in Nigeria" 55). Since video dramas are produced almost solely for commercial purposes, the producers tread on safe zones, with no ambition to create unnecessary controversies. As Okome also notes, popular video films do not make any pretentious move to indulge in intellectualism. The objective of the video filmmaker is not to problematize

issues, but produce narratives that teach a moral lesson or two. The video feature films produced so far have not done any in-depth historical or political analysis of Ghanaian society. It is evident, however, that most of the films are geared toward acting as a social conscience of Ghanaian society. The difficult economic situation that has plagued the country is popular in many feature films, but government and military take-overs have not yet been subjects in these video films.

The approach of simplicity by video filmmakers is the main departure point between earlier Ghanaian movies and the video films. Filmmakers like Kwaw Ansah, trained under GFIC, believe that films should be made to conform to the cultural policies of Ghana. To such filmmakers, it is important to use film to retrieve valuable traditional elements instead of blindly adopting Western values. In an interview with Françoise Pfaff, Kwaw Ansah notes that "pride in our cultures has to be restored. Our cultures have indeed to be revitalized" (187). Though this is a laudable project, urban middle and lower classes care less about the restoration of the African heritage; hence, Ansah's *Heritage Africa* was more popular among intellectuals than the masses. The popularity of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Ghana since 1983 has made many urban dwellers view things through the doctrines and the practices of the church. These churches teach that Ghana is not progressing economically because of traditional cultural practices. Many preachers proclaim that breaking

from the past is the only way by which the country will be revived economically. While educated people struggle to reclaim the past, "many ordinary people do not share this feeling of alienation and are not concerned with their 'African heritage'. In their experience, tradition is not something lost, but disturbingly alive, through witchcraft and a host of other 'evil spirits', and is to be rejected on religious grounds" (Meyer, "Popular Ghanaian Cinema" 103). To the ordinary people, the past is not something to be cherished, but something to absolutely reject and discard. They do not see the possibility of a compromise between African heritage and their Christian beliefs. The masses are not concerned about the decolonized intellectual, but rather they share negative sentiments about traditional cultural practices. These people do not consider it important to resist the proliferation of Western lifestyles.

The success of the Ghanaian video film industry depends largely on audience reception, and "because producers cannot risk a financial disaster, they do their best to keep their eyes and ears open and to visualize stories which are around in the popular quarters (where they themselves usually live) (Meyer, "Popular Ghanaian Cinema" 100). While earlier movies drew awareness to issues on a deeper critical level and from sophisticated intellectual point of view, video filmmakers deal with the problems in society on the surface and on the individual level. Video filmmakers regard it as their duty to warn audiences about the dangers of urban life. Approaching the issues of life

from a superficial standpoint is an essential prerequisite for filmmakers who wish to make money.

Regardless of the criticisms levelled against video films, it is worth noting that, for the first time in Ghana, feature films became widespread and accessible to the populace. This popularity was made possible by television resulting in the opening of many video stores in all the major cities. Also for the first time in the history of Ghana, there is a visible visual culture created by video films. Though Ghanaian video films are produced without assistance from multinational media giants, Ghanaian popular cinema was able to establish itself and have been able to sustain its audience in order to keep the industry growing.

The majority of the films identify social evils and devise possible means to correct them. Since political rulers seem to have lost control, and the populace does not trust them, the church becomes the answer. Esi Sutherland-Addy's article, "The Ghanaian Feature Video Phenomenon," comments on the concerns of video filmmakers, who are also producers, directors, and scriptwriters. She points to the use of film to correct social evils. To them, "the power of film as a medium is to present to society the nature and effects of certain forms of behaviour or particular practices, especially as they relate primarily to the domestic context and to the workplace" (267). Filmmakers believe that the medium of film is an effective avenue to decolonize the mind

and fight social evil. This approach resonates with traditional story telling and the concert party tradition, which are geared towards correcting social evils. Sutherland-Addy also compares video film with other art forms such as theatre and song, including concert party and highlife music. She classifies the message presented in the art forms into three areas: human nature, domestic crises, and stresses involved in the modernization process. These themes are heavily imbedded in video film production. In her comparison, Sutherland-Addy notes:

> Like the songs of social comment and satire, the films in their entirety are a cutting exposure of deeds conceived and conducted in secrecy. This approach leaves the guilty parties to grapple with social opprobrium while at the same time demonstrating that those who point accusing fingers have questions to answer. (268)

A casual viewing of many Ghanaian video films proves Sutherland-Addy's point. In *Diabolo I & II*, for example, the main character is a young, attractive suitor who lures girls to bed and then turns into a python and kills them by entering their vaginas and coming out with money. Filmmaker Reverend Kofi Yirenkyi is an example of a director who relies on traditional story telling methods. He "makes a conscious commitment to [explore] the aesthetics of traditional tales, mythic legends, and their derivatives in the concert party theatre tradition. He does this in a bid to evolve an authentic African film tradition, with an independent aesthetic" (Sutherland-Addy 274). Written, directed, and produced by Kofi Yirenkyi, *Kanana* examines the connection

between the natural and the supernatural worlds. Yirenkyi presents a positive image of the traditional world by revealing it as a rich resource for filmmaking. The film tells the story of Akata and Akatsa, who are ostracized from their village for stealing. As they wander in the forest, they come upon a village, where they instantly become heroes after killing Seberebe, a horrible creature, that haunts the village. The two characters are given gold and other precious ornaments for safe keeping because the people believe the items will be safe with them due to their bravery. Akata and Akatsa attempt to run away with the valuable property, but a mysterious beast overtakes them and casts a spell on them. The mysterious being is synonymous with the antelope woman, who is popular in a number of Ghanaian folktales. Martin Owusu, a Ghanaian playwright and scholar, re-created this character in his stage play *The Story Ananse Told,* which was later produced for a GBC-TV theatre series. The characterizations of Akata and Akatsa are similar to the folktale character of Kweku Ananse, the trickster who is always stimulated by greed to do evil. As Sutherland-Addy argues, the film "*Kanana* represents a bold attempt to explore a range of aesthetic continuities between established traditional forms and the audiovisual medium for an audience which has been fed on a diet of foreign films" (275).

The audience expects to receive a moral message at the end of watching a film; this expectation resonates with Ghanaian traditional story telling called

Anansesem, where folktales and proverbs leave listeners with a moral message. The films in this genre rely heavily on traditional elements for their production and dissemination as the traditional components are recreated and assigned new functions. These compositions are unique because there seems to be a conscious effort to amalgamate traditional and metropolitan cultures. Commenting on the situation, Barber points out that the originality of popular arts is made possible by their "unofficial" nature and the innovations that are exerted into them. These arts, Barber notes "are unofficial because they are free to operate between established cultural systems without conforming to their conventions, and they are novel because they combine elements from the traditional and the metropolitan cultures in unprecedented conjunctures, with the effect of radical departure from both" (13). Though the films draw heavily on traditional oral narrative structures and allegories, the video film art form is an unapologetically urban. The stories are told from the point of view of the city dweller, who is the major subject of examination. The films set in an urban centre usually present a juxtaposition of wealthy people and those aspiring to acquire massive wealth. Okome notes that video films portray the city "as the center of action where all things happen, conceivable and inconceivable. It is the place for the upwardly mobile, the rich, and the flashy. It is at once heaven and hell on earth" ("Video Film in Nigeria" 64). The city in these films is an ambivalent space which both makes and crashes dreams; it represents the good,

the bad, and the ugly. The main focus of the films is on wealthy families, and does not pragmatically reflect the real life of the majority of the members of the audience. Instead, the storyline becomes a motivating factor which propels members of video audience who are below the poverty line to work harder so that they can achieve their dreams and live a better life. As Adejunmobi suggests, the "specific attraction of the films resides in their deployment of narratives of mobility that feed upon the anxieties and desires of disparate social groups seeking to rise beyond their present situation in life" (85). Such being the case, viewers are not connected by ethnic or tribal affiliations, but by their common aspiration to a better life. The acquisition of wealth, which is the driving force for many characters, leads to the indulgence of occultism. Sutherland-Addy notes that "we are presented with a view of humanity distorted and disfigured by its fickleness and the motif of greed. Its ugly, even grotesque manifestations and tragic consequences seem to underline many of the plots so far used" (268). Filmmakers seem to be concerned with drawing their audience's attention to social evils, and the brutalities that exist in society. These images are supposed to caution viewers to beware of fraudsters.

The thematic concerns of Ghanaian video filmmakers follow the pattern of earlier popular art forms such as popular fiction. The focus on man-woman relationships within and outside of marriage is a dominant theme in Ghanaian popular fiction. Domestic dramas feature prominently in Ghanaian video films;

thus, issues regarding family life and relationships are brought to the forefront significantly. The use of the domestic space in the video films is a direct replica of what popular fictions deal with. Before the advent of video films, popular fictions featured stories of promiscuous young girls who enter into amorous relationships with rich old men and how responsible women with strong traditional family values fight to preserve the family institution. Stephanie Newell notes that "characters such as the goodtime girl, the barren woman and the gangster surface recurrently in African popular fiction and comic strips throughout the continent. These characters take the form of 'old familiars' being ethical figures which readers will recognise and judge using existing repertoires of knowledge" (5). In accordance with authors of popular fiction, contemporary filmmakers use gender as a fundamental tool to explain urban society. Both the authors and filmmakers focus on urban independent women whose sexual behaviours are contrary to the standards set by society because city girls engage in reckless sexual practices and are deemed to have no moral values. These narratives thereby present a juxtaposition of morality in the city and the village. While the city girl is shown to be morally corrupt and promiscuous, the village mother represents the ideal morally pure womanhood who is the foundation of the family institution. Though the village is sometimes negatively represented in some Ghanaian video films, the village is in no doubt "redeemed as a utopian setting in which local debates about community values, paternal

authority, honest labour and female submission are staged" (7). Ghanaian popular arts present a rich resource for cultural studies and it is important to note that "just as many proverbs and folktales are incomprehensible to those without detailed contextual knowledge and experience of the society in which they are produced, so too the 'deep' meanings that attach to African popular plots, genres, and character types require a great deal of contextualization in order to be understood" (5). This project thereby embarks on providing a detailed cultural analysis of the place of men and masculinities in the selected video films.

Both popular fiction and video films tell stories purposely to teach moral lessons. Ime Ikiddeh notes that teaching moral values "remains the writer's primary assignment in these stories, persistent and undisguised" (78). E. K. Mickson, one of the best known popular fiction writers in Ghana, states bluntly in the preface to *When the Heart Decides* that the story is being told as "a forewarning to many a young man desperately in love, against heartbreaks". He further states that the second reason for the story is "because it will serve as a reprimand and perhaps a 'purgative' to those of our ladies who, flattered by their beauty, popularity or positions in life, make not only folly but also donkeys of themselves by remaining rolling stones in the hands of men—changing from man to man" (5). Love stories exploring the complexities of family life are prominent in popular fiction and video films follow the same

trend. It is common to deduce at first glance that these popular arts are engaged in addressing visible social problems. Ikiddeh further observes that "in Ghanaian fiction, the woman is almost invariably the cause of friction and disruption. The man becomes a powerless victim of her extravagance, greed, duplicity, or unfaithfulness. Invariably too, it is the man's wealth or status that attracts her into any relationship" (78). Popular video films have taken these man-woman relationships into another dimension where men engage in corrupt practices in order to attract and retain women under their (men's) control.

Religious films play a vital role here, because they propagate the message that good riches can only be acquired through just and honest means. The main characters live in houses that are walled and closed to the public, but, through the eye of the camera, the audience can peep through all the corners of the house from the bathroom to the bedroom. The images afford viewers "a glimpse of the world of richly furnished houses filled with imported consumer goods" (Newell 6). To the average Ghanaian living in the city, a simple comfortable life is his or her immediate concern and "such comfortable lives are transferred to popular narratives in the form of realistic fantasies, meticulously describing the lives of the fabulously rich" (Newell 6). The films do not only bring dreams to life, but expose the fact that those who live in wealthy houses are concerned with the same problems as those who live in single rooms

struggling to make ends meet. The beautiful life behind the closed iron gates is under attack from external forces. Video films construct a standard of city life, encouraging audiences to aim for all that the city have to offer and at the same time presenting them with cataclysmic realities of city life. According to Okome, video films, "construct the city in their own image, sometimes reducing the problems of the city to the mere pleasure of gazing and in some instances merely for desire to feed the male voyeuristic curiosity, yet they provide a new and refreshing way to look at the city. It is a medium of the city created and nurtured in the city" ("Video Film in Nigeria" 58). This is a common function of popular arts in Africa, as Barber asserts that popular art "furthers the cause of the people by opening their eyes to their objective situation in society" (7). The video films have "kept to the tradition of all popular: cooked to the taste of large numbers, finished and served out fast and consumed while is still hot" (Ikiddeh 73).

In her introduction to *Readings in African Popular Fiction*, Stephanie Newell reveals that what "is shared between all of the essays collected [in the book] is the sense that popular fiction is an urban phenomenon, conveying urban aspirations and fantasies, and assisting readers in their efforts to come to terms with crime and poverty and urban living conditions generally" (6). The focus on the city and wealth in the videos follows the pattern of earlier popular art forms such as the popular fiction, highlife music, and concert parties, which

concentrate largely on material wealth. In some ways, Ghanaian video films are actively involved in the re-telling of stories already told by other popular art forms preceding it. With the plague of poverty and corruption among leaders still prevalent on the continent, it is no surprise that these popular art forms interrogate these pressing issues. Drawing from his extensive study of Onitsha Market Literature, Emmanuel Obiechina shows that the writers of the pamphlets perceive money as the core of modern life. He emphasizes that, irrespective of his social or public status, a man needs money to survive:

> If you are on the lower wrungs of the economic ladder, you need money to purchase yourself a bicycle, a radio and get yourself a wife. On the higher economic level, you need a motor car, a radiogram, a house, money to provide sumptuous and lavish parties as befits your dignity and to buy gorgeous and costly clothes that would symbolize your social standing. (12)

The presence or absence of money has been the major theme for many popular arts forms in Ghana, as well as other parts of Africa. In Ghanaian video films, both men and women come under attack for the way they behave negatively in order to acquire wealth. Beautiful young girls misuse their sexuality to access material wealth from married elderly men who seek to re-live their youthful days. It is important to note that the video filmmakers are concerned with the same issues as popular novelists:

> Throughout the continent, popular novelists seem to be responding to Africa's pervasive economic crises through their protagonists and plot. Authors are engaged in the construction of symbolic economies,

> converting and transforming real economic relations into symbolic ones and helping to generate explanations of (mis)fortune that will touch the experiences of their readers. (Newell 6)

By reading about characters who use dishonest means to acquire wealth, readers can rationalize their own poverty as well as perceive themselves as morally superior. Since fraudulent wealthy characters are punished severely in the end, the plots "thus offer symbolic resolutions to the everyday problems to non-elite readers" (Newell 6). Actively continuing the pace set by popular writers and other popular artists, popular filmmakers reveal the symbolic economy in their films through the relationship between wealthy old men and young girls, as well the characters' involvement in occultism for the acquisition of money. Commenting on the theme of wealth and the place of women in Ghanaian popular fiction, Ikiddeh writes:

> Wealth, the corrupting mammon , is condemned, and with it, the acquisitive attitude, but there is undeclared admiration for the man who has got his loot without trouble; the respect he commands, the influence he exerts, and the pleasures open to him in his community are all too lavishly emphasized. As for the woman in these novelettes, usually somewhat educated and domiciled in the town, she is condemned by standards both traditional and Christian which are contrary to her acquired urban values. (76)

Watching a video film initiates conversation about morality among the audience, and they gain temporary feelings of superiority that they identify with the good side. They also gain the opportunity to gaze voyeuristically at the

powers of darkness. Audiences empathize with a man who earns his wealth by just means and evil doers are vehemently condemned. Symbolic resolutions come through the Pentecostal-Charismatic pastor, who through the impartation of the Holy Spirit reveals the corrupt deeds done in secret. Meyer notes that, "popular film feeds immediately on what goes on in society and thus is part and parcel of ongoing public debates, producers are not free to make just the film they would like. For instance, it would mean financial suicide to bring out a movie which represents Christianity in a negative way" ("Money & Power" 8). The nearness of the narratives to the real life of the audiences makes the video films an important phenomenon for cultural analysis. The films' popularity with the audiences is based on their topicality and closeness to everyday reality in which members of the audiences live. Barber is right when she states that:

> The vocabulary used to convey an impression of popular art forms return over and over again to the same qualities. They are said to be direct; fresh; naïve; simple; vigorous; charming; vivid; crude; unsophisticated; full of life. Above all, they are accessible to a wide range of people. It has been suggested that they are straight forward because their urban audience is ethnically and educationally mixed. To be accessible to them, the art has to appeal to a lowest common denominator of comprehension. (43)

It is evident in Barber's assertion that all the words used to describe popular arts are action words that create vivid images. For a popular art to succeed and have any sense of longevity, it is crucial for the process and content of the

productions to be simple without making undue demands on the intellectual and emotional effort of the consumers. Accessibility both in terms of comprehension and economics is one factor that has made the video films popular. While popular fiction for example, was available to only those who could read and understand English, video films are made readily available to a larger audience irrespective of educational background. Before the advent of video films, accessibility of Ghanaian movies was for the privileged few who could afford to go to the theatre. In addition, movie theatres were located only in the cities and towns so those in the villages were excluded. However, with the emergence of video films came electrification projects to the rural areas, and popularity of television sets and simple VCD players in the Ghanaian market. It can be argued that video films enjoy such extreme success as a result of development projects nationwide. Video films appeal to people from varied walks of life because the "audiences of Ghanaian movie cannot easily be pinned down to a distinct social category. In fact we are here concerned with a mass phenomenon which encompasses virtually everybody except the financial and educational elites and . . . cuts across ethnic divisions" (Meyer, "Money & Power" 68).

Women play a vital role in the advertisement of the films, as they encourage their male partners to buy films for home use. Okome notes that one reason which promoted the popularity of the video films in the city is their

viewing context. Many viewers prefer watching these films in the safety of their homes due to the insecurity at cinema halls. The mass production of the films for home use "include another group of movie audience that was kept at the fringe of film audience for a long time: the female audience" (Okome, "Video Film in Nigeria" 62). Violence against women connected with cinema halls as well as the mysterious disappearance of women in the Accra metropolis during the early 1990s prevented many women to go out in the night. The emergence of video films gave women the opportunity to consume these films in the comfort of their homes. In addition, the urban woman became an important subject of scrutiny because women issues are discussed and closely examined. The filmmakers, being aware of the important economic role women play, create images that will appeal to women. Thus, women are the heroines in many of the video films. Female characters are portrayed as the custodians of traditional family values. They often have to defend the family from extended family members who sometimes infiltrate their homes or from girlfriends of morally weak husbands. The filmmaker might not share the same ideological perspective with viewers, but unless he/she creates images that strike a chord in people, the film will fail. Because video films are both produced and consumed locally, they "seem to have a better claim to speak with the authentic voice of the people than [the arts] that are either imported from another culture.

They also seem to be endowed with greater dynamism and vitality in the cultural map" (Barber 24).

In whatever way one looks at the video films, it is obvious that the narratives talk about what the masses think is essential and the stories are presented in an attempt to see life through the viewers' perspective. Roger Horrocks observes that "popular art forms are also interesting in themselves, because they have a high degree of energy, an aesthetic quality that may lack finesse but provides something satisfying in its own way. There is something valuable and pleasurable in 'reclaiming' areas of culture that were formerly disdained or simply ignored (1). In the 'reclaiming' process, video productions in Ghana have been able to make private domestic family life public by producing many family dramas. The videos make it possible for "women's fear about sexuality, gender and family become the subjects of public debate, creating for them a sense of social importance. In some ways, discussing the lives of women is an indication that they are a part of the larger society and this satisfies their psychological needs" (Okome, "Video Film in Nigeria" 62). This realization is very keen to filmmakers since women's involvement in making video films popular cannot be over emphasized. The focus on domestic issues as well as marital relationships makes the video films genre appropriate for gender studies.

Ghanaian Masculinities: Past and Present

There have been very few serious critical studies of Ghanaian men presented in essays, articles, and reviews in periodicals, journals, and books. The scant studies that have appeared do not offer enough detailed discussion on the subject of Ghanaian masculinities. Stephan Miescher's book *Making Men in Ghana* (2005) is the only example of a book solely dedicated to discussing Ghanaian men. My study hopes to bridge this gap by closely examining men and their relationship with others in popular Ghanaian video films. My project views men and masculinities through the lens of gender studies by analyzing the content of a popular art form—video film. This project contributes to the studies of men and masculinity in Africa by drawing attention to how the Ghanaian video film industry depicts and constructs gendered discourses. I am very much aware of the gaps in my research, as my attention is focused only on heterosexual men. This is solely the result of my inability to find any video film which addresses the subject of homosexuality. I heard about video films that address the subject of homosexuality, but I could not find any at the time of this research. Popular Ghanaian video films are predominantly concerned with heterosexual men. This is understandable, as the patriarchal regime in Ghana defines itself in the traditional male.

Though there are no written rules regarding becoming an adult male, the journey from boyhood to manhood in Ghanaian society demands that the boy

child perform specific acts inscribed in social norms in order to be accepted as an adult male. Such demands put Ghanaian men in precarious positions where they constantly have to contest and defend their masculinities. The chapters in this dissertation carefully examine the complex negotiation of masculinities and the economic and cultural revolutions that have shaped how men deal with their responsibilities as heads of their households and bread winners of their homes. The discussion on fatherhood and sexuality, for example, shows how domesticity and sexuality are equally important to Ghanaian men and women. Men and masculinities in the films are constructed, shaped, and maintained from diverse perspectives; these include traditional cultural practices, community standards, and foreign concepts imposed upon the country due to missionary activities and colonialism.

In "Making of Presbyterian Teachers: Masculinities and Programs of Education in Colonial Ghana," Stephan F. Miescher illustrates the coexistence of multiple hegemonic masculinities in colonial Ghana. He begins by criticizing David Gilmore for asserting that "there is *one* approved way of being an adult male in any given society" (89). Miescher finds Gilmore's position untenable, because there is the possibility of having different notions of masculinity in any given society. Miescher finds R.W. Connell's approach of examining different forms of masculinities—hegemonic, subordinate, and subversive—more appropriate, but points out Connell's failure to recognize the "historical and

cultural situations within which several hegemonic masculinities may coexist" (89). Miescher points out that multiple hegemonic masculinities have historically coexisted in Ghanaian society.

Using the work of T.C. McCaskie as a backdrop, Miescher identifies three hegemonic masculinities that coexisted in colonial Ghana. McCaskie outlines the coexistence of multiple forms of hegemonic masculinities among the Ashantis of Southern Ghana during the twentieth century. The coexistence of multiple hegemonic masculinities was a result of traditional cultural practices, and the political history which created both local and foreign institutions that promoted and maintained various dominant masculinities. In the pre-colonial Ashante kingdom, there were three main notions of masculinity: "adult masculinity signified by marriage; senior masculinity reflected in the figure of an elder (*opanyin*); and the status of the big man (*obirempon*)" (Miescher 90). The adult masculine elder gained access to his position through marriage. The *Opanyin*'s position was that of a masculine elder who has demonstrated his ability to speak well in public and to mediate in conflicts in the community. The third hegemonic masculine position, *obirempon* or "big man," was a position reserved for rich farmers and well established traders who had created a positive impact on society with their wealth. The position of the *obirempon* became politicized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the colonial state reserved the right to confer the title

upon an individual who had distinguished himself by the accumulation of massive wealth, shared his wealth with the less privileged, and contributed to state developments (McCaskie). Miescher notes that "it is not always obvious whether notions of masculinity are dominant, since understandings of masculinity depend on specific contexts and on different subject positions that may educe contrary readings of hegemony" (90). The elder, *opanyin*, and *obirempon* coexisted in society, and none of these positions was considered more important than the other. Missionary activities and colonialism promoted the complexity of masculinity in Ghana. Miescher notes that Basel missionaries shaped the lives of boys into monogamous husbands whose primary commitment is to their wives and children, and secondarily to their *abusua* (extended family members). Colonial institutions like the civil service, scouting, and the police also created different dimensions of male spaces with diverse behavioural codes. Miescher notes:

> Understandings of masculinity were defined, promoted, and negotiated in these homosocial settings in which men engaged with other males across generations. Moreover, mothers, daughters, sisters, and spouses expressed their expectations of men. In the twentieth century, none of these institutions or settings occupied a privileged position of fabricating a single hegemonic masculinity. Rather different social contexts created expectations of specific notions of masculine behavior. (90)

Using the life histories of five Presbyterian teachers, Miescher describes how multiple hegemonic masculine positions concurrently existed in colonial

Ghanaian society. The teachers have been able to perform multiple tasks as educationists, catechists, husbands, fathers, and elders of their communities. As professional teachers, they followed the code of discipline established by the missionaries and colonial authorities. The code of ethics of the educational system and the Bible controlled their lives while they were at their various stations. But when these teachers travelled to their hometowns or joined the council of elders in the local communities, the missionary laws that guided them at work were not respected or adhered to. Their training at mission schools exposed them to foreign cultural values and created new opportunities for them. These teachers, "seemed to have embraced a multiplicity of masculine identities that fit different and changing life contexts: as *akrakyefoo,* claiming a certain status; as teachers at their work stations; as catechists, spreading the gospel; as husbands and fathers within their marriages; and as members of their lineages and elders within their hometowns (Miescher 103). They are many instances in Ghanaian video films such as *The Broken Wall, Expectations,* and *Idols of Heart,* when men have taken on multiple masculine identities. The men caught up in such environments create their own rhythms and styles to adapt to the multiple positions in which society has placed them. Such men contend with complex ideas of gender as they shuffle between their positions as elders in their communities, workers in companies, Christian leaders in their churches, and husbands and fathers in their homes. In order to survive within the system,

these men must redefine themselves according to the dictates of their responsibilities. Western education, urbanization, industrialization, multiplicity of Christian movements, tradition versus modernity—to mention but a few societal forces—have made the situation of the men in the video films very complex. They constantly come face to face with moments when they have to negotiate multiple masculine positions. The men who are unable to redefine themselves and properly negotiate their positions may resort to violence. As represented in some video films, extreme behaviour (violence or depression) in men is often a result of frustration caused by inability to function in the multiple roles expected of them.

Men and masculinities in Ghanaian films are deployed through different institutions that encourage particular philosophies of masculinity. A major component of this dissertation is to identify and explore the different institutions that promote particular masculine ideas and the kinds of environments that such institutions create for the performance of gender relations and identities. In order to understand what these video films are telling us about society, "we have to understand them as art forms, this means not just appreciating their aesthetic qualities in some vague way, but engaging with them in a specific and detailed attempt to 'read' them according to their own conventions" (Barber 34). To examine these video films through the lens of gender demands the identification of men's experiences within definite

geographical environments, to meticulously investigate how inequalities came about and were maintained, and to determine how power was attained and disseminated.

Discussions in the individual chapters are heavily influenced by theories of men and masculinity studies from both Africa and the West. David Gilmore's series of questions on the definition of masculinity forms the basis of the questions that are addressed in this work: "Are men everywhere alike in their concern for being "manly"? If so, why? Why is the demand made upon males to "be a man" or "act like a man" voiced in so many places? And why are boys and youths so often tested or indoctrinated before being awarded their manhood" (9)? This project addresses the above questions by applying critical theories of men and masculinity studies to the analysis of the lives and experiences of men in Ghanaian video films. My work draws on the existing perspectives of men and masculinities from Africa and the rest of the world. These chapters seek to investigate the fact that Ghanaian men are not a unified or a homogeneous group because their positions keep changing across time and space, and because the way men are ranked in association with other men and women differ according to these dimensions.

The video films I discuss are representative of the different versions of masculinities that exist in Ghana. Each video film can be considered as constructing Ghanaian masculinity in a unique pattern. The films were selected

to indicate the trend of development, and the position of the male figure, in both rural and urban Ghana. The various films examined are representative of themes that are very popular with the audience. This is the way Sutherland-Addy itemizes issues prevalent in Ghanaian video films:

> It would appear that, perhaps anticipating the taste of audiences, the trend is to dramatize and portray elements of popular culture engendered by features such as urbanization, straitened economic circumstances, alienation from traditional values, and the stresses of domestic life as well by disturbing issues of topical interest. The film-makers appear to find didactic moralism quite in consonance with the role of other aesthetic spokespersons in society such as singers and writers. (277)

Critically examining how the above factors affect the construction of masculinities in the video films, the analyses of the selected video films confirm that the structure and practice of masculinity is complex. There is no singular concept of masculinity, only different versions of masculinity that continues to shift from one perspective to another. This dissertation explores how Ghanaian filmmakers construct gendered discourses. In this regard, Karin Barber makes an important point by recognizing that,

> What is needed, however is an approach that recognizes that popular arts have their own conventions through which real experience is transformed, articulated, and made communicable. In other words, if they use elements from the established traditions, they also do so in accordance with their own principles in order to construct their own meanings in their own way. (38)

The video films mediate life experiences of common people and show how urbanization plays a vital role in post-colonial Ghana. Though gender constructions have shifted greatly in Ghanaian society, it is glaring in the video films that men in Ghana are still dominant figures in both the domestic and public domains. The notion that the man is the boss in the home because he is the family breadwinner still exists in traditional homes and even in urban families. The division of labour at home positions the woman and the children in the kitchen, so that a "man who frequents the kitchen too often [is] regarded as a 'female male'; and if he does help in the chores which have been traditionally assigned to women, such as cooking or sweeping the house or bathing the children, it [is] assumed that he [has] been bewitched by the wife" (Asssimeng 61). Masculinities represented in the video films function differently, depending on whether the space is colonial or postcolonial, urban or rural, poor or rich, educated or uneducated. They are expressed by means of different kinds of cultural productions.

Why Study Masculinities in Ghanaian Video Films?

Family drama has been the major genre of the Ghanaian video films; even films dealing with other thematic concerns such as occultism and religion trace their plots back to the home. Men have featured prominently in these films as the man is traditionally regarded as the head of the home. Men are featured in

multiple roles, prominently as husbands and fathers. Some films provide insight into the influence fathers have on their children—men as breadwinners and protectors of the home; others investigate the relationships of husbands and wives or how men relate to other men. Women in the films are generally dependant on men, hence men are able to keep them at home. These tactics largely succeed as the woman stays at home for the sake of the family. As Emmanuel Reynaud explains,

> For a woman, being confined within a sex category is all the more sharply felt to be a form of mutilation for it corresponds directly with her oppression: [...] For men, on the contrary, their category symbolizes their power; everything which defines them as "masculine" is valorizing, even to the extent that men do not generally see themselves as a separate group, but rather as a reference for the species—are not humans as a rule referred to as "man"? (6–7)

The majority of the video films show that the ideal place for women is the home. Women are projected as fulfilling their destiny within the patriarchy when they stay at home and take care of the children and other domestic chores. A woman who embarks on finding another means of living her life must be prepared to fight through terrible challenges in order to survive. Filmmakers are actively involved in projecting dominant ideals of masculinity. Townsend describes the situation as follows:

> The particular definition of masculinity that is hegemonic changes over time and varies from society to society. In any particular situation, however, the dominant model of masculinity provides the basic cultural patterns of expectation and outlook that all men and women must

> confront, whether they accept these expectations, rebel against them, or espouse alternatives. (5)

The various masculinities portrayed in Ghanaian video films confirm Townsend's assertion as the dominant models featured in the films reflect the cultural patterns and ideals of the larger society. These images evolve directly from the political and economic points of view of the filmmakers (who are mostly men). In the films, characters who depart from full participation within the accepted structures are regarded as failures. Reynaud observes that old ideas do not easily die, and though we are fully aware of the mechanisms placed in society to foster oppression, our society still accepts the unequal power structure between men and women as natural. To make the categorization less obvious, some haphazard arrangements are made in order to make it more palatable:

> Patriarchy generally succeeds in deceiving people; even though our daily lives are governed by it, many people only see it in distant lands or remote periods of history. The forms through which it is articulated today, private or state capitalism, can disguise its own mechanisms of oppression and exploitation. But whatever the particular modes of production it secretes, patriarchy is characterized first and foremost by the division of humans into sexes, which is expressed by the appropriation of women and the struggle for power among men. (Reynaud 8)

In this study, I show how Ghanaian video films attempt to make sense of men's actions as sons, husbands and fathers. My focus is on critically examining how

popular ideas exposed in the films construct Ghanaian masculinities. The gender theory within this work is embedded and sometimes spontaneous. I have assembled diverse theories to aid me in my analyses; technical terms and my theoretical arguments are explained as they arise.

Chapter Outlines

The dissertation opens with a focus on rural Ghana. Chapter One—Rural Masculinities: Men in Rural Ghana — analyzes the film, *Tribal War 1 & 2,* examining the position of the father in traditional Ghanaian society. The duties of the father as custodian of family traditions and family property, and as economic provider of the family, are explored. The chapter further examines the relationships between fathers and sons and the familial positions of wives and daughters. A significant aspect of *Tribal War* is the importance of marriage to men. Due to the significant role marriage plays in masculine validation, parents (especially fathers) are very concerned about who their sons marry, since a son's marriage can directly affect a father's status in society. Though marriage bestows adult masculinity on men, a man may lose his masculinity if he does not perform satisfactorily as husband and father. The chapter examines the different versions of fatherhood and the generational gap and ideologies between fathers and their sons; it concludes with a critical examination of the

priest who is the ultimate masculine figure because he gains his masculinity from the metaphysical world.

Chapter Two—Hallelujah Masculinities: Creating the Balance at Home, Church, and Work—presents a discussion of the influence of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian movements on contemporary video films. Specifically, it examines the construction of masculinities in the film *The Broken Wall* by analyzing the role and place of the born-again Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian father at home, church, and work. The discussion is focused on the principal characters; their given circumstances are examined through the lens of Christian theology and other teachings about Christian masculinities at home, church, and work. The chapter demonstrates that select independent video filmmakers have proposed a new version of modernity rooted in Pentecostal-Charismatic ideals and teachings, and have thus contributed to the emergence of some version of Pentecostal-Charismatic masculinities.

Male sexual potency is an important component of the Ghanaian family institution. A man is expected to satisfy his wife sexually and father children. Any man who fails to perform his sexual duties becomes a by-word and a proverb. Chapter Three—Phallic Masculinities: Men's Sexuality as Masculinity—focuses on the role of the penis in constructing masculinities. Analyzing *Idols of Heart* and *Dabi Dabi 1*, this chapter explores the sexual practices of men who use sexual virility as a means of proving their

masculinity. The first section explores the effects of sterility and impotence on the construction of masculinity. The second part probes why men of influence and affluence still feel unsure of their masculinities and, as a result, use their wealth to sexually violate women. As men embark on creating a distinct masculine identity through sex with multiple partners, they face the destruction of their masculinity through the HIV. Chapter Three concludes with the representation of sexuality in the film where sex is part of the plot but is not seen on-screen.

Another important arena that maintains and protects a man's masculinity in the home is his ability to feed and clothe his wife and children. Unemployment, or lack of regular income, threatens a man's masculinity and leaves him vulnerable to violence, from without and within. Chapter Four—Blood Masculinities: Men's Violences in Private and Public—takes a closer look at occultism in video films and how men's involvement in occultism results in violence. Chapter Four explores the violences perpetrated in *Time* through Michael Kaufman's theory of the triad of men's violences. Extending this triad, the chapter also examines men's violence against young people within the family unit.

The conclusion to this project re-visits some of the main argument in this dissertation in order to help clarify some of the discussions made in the various chapters. The conclusion shows that the result of inequality between men and

women relegates women to domestic chores while men enjoy free domestic labour. The scenarios in the various films show that many fathers (even those actively involved in childcare) believe that housework is a woman's responsibility—men who perform domestic chores regularly think they are doing their wives a favour.

CHAPTER 1

RURAL MASCULINITIES: FATHERHOOD AND MEN IN RURAL GHANA

> *Masculinity is not something that is just "there," a Mount Everest in the social landscape of rural life. Masculinity is something that is done: something we practice – something we do and something we do over and over again, trying to get it right, as we best understand that rightness. As we practice masculinity, however, we inevitably shape it to the specific local contexts in which we find ourselves. Masculinity is indeed there in the landscape of rural life, but because we practice and shape it, it is far from an unchanging monolith.* (Hugh Campbell, et al 23)

Family Drama

Family drama has dominated the Ghanaian video film scene since its inception in 1987. These films explore problems that confront people at home rather than serving a public agenda as was the case of colonial cinema. The films are usually set in the house of the main protagonists with a distinct demarcation between houses in the urban centres and those of rural areas. Houses in the cities are walled, a huge iron gate at the entrance is guarded by a security man, and they are occupied by the modern nuclear family. The wall separates the nuclear family members from their extended family. Houses in rural areas are usually not surrounded by walls. If they have walls, they are such that people can easily move to and from the houses without the interference of huge iron gates and security personnel. The free movement of people in the rural areas promotes community living. Domestic drama focuses on family institution and highlights the positions and roles of the various members of the family, as well

the problems that have plagued the modern family as a result of the struggle between tradition versus modernity. Meyer explains that "focusing on marital drama, with all the conflicts between the spouses and the extended family it entails, popular films highlight problems that are easily recognizable to the audiences" (Meyer, "Ghanaian Popular Cinema" 212). These films portray the challenges men face in the process of validating their masculinities through marriage and fatherhood. The male child is often expected by the immediate family and society to fulfil a set of requirements in order to be recognized as a man. Young men and women therefore come into conflict with their families when they pursue relationships that the family considers inferior. Marriage is an institution which bestows honour, power, and dominion upon the individual and his family.

The Role of Men in Marriage

Male children in Ghanaian video films have socially prescribed acts to perform in order to participate in the masculine culture. Irrespective of their ethnicity, language, geographical location, or class, boys are expected to grow from boyhood to manhood. Becoming a man does not depend on age only. Video films like *Dabi 1 & 2* and *Opportunity 1 & 2*, all set in the rural area, clearly set out the process through which boys grow into men. To become adults, both boys and girls are taken through initiation rites that introduce them to

adulthood. Sarpong records that "after the performance of one's initiation ceremonies, one has the right, and is at times bound, to perform certain acts that were formerly out of bounds to one" (73). Initiation rites announce that one has been translated from childhood to adulthood. Upon reaching this stage, society demands the performance of certain undertakings that give recognition to the new adult. One of the most important requirements after initiation rites is marriage. Ghanaians believe that apart from the days of birth and death, the day of marriage is the most important in a person's life. Kwame Gyekye draws attention to the importance of marriage, especially to men:

> Marriage is a requirement of the society, an obligation every man and woman must fulfil, a drama of life in which every man and woman must participate ... a young man who has gainful employment of any kind and earns income is expected, in fact urged, to marry. Any undue delay on the part of the young man to marry will cause his parents or the elders in the lineage to worry and even to interfere in his private life in order to advise and encourage him to marry. (76)

Marriage is an institution from which men cannot easily opt out because to do so will have serious repercussions on one's image in the society. Although society considers marriage an important institution for both men and women, "husbands are the greater beneficiaries. Men reap greater gains than women for virtually every outcome affected by marriage" (Nock 3). Two important questions that arise from Steven Nock's discussion on the importance of marriage to men are: "What is it about being married that matters to men? And

why the *quality* of the relationship be less important for husbands than for wives" (3-4)? Among Ghanaians, getting married bestows adult masculinity on men. Moreover, marriage is a social institution that promotes a set of ideologies and conventions; therefore, when a man gets married he binds himself with a set of rules and regulations and he is expected to perform satisfactorily based on societal expectations. Such being the case, men marry in order to fulfil the public expectations required of them and whether such marriages are good or bad, the man maintains his identity as a married man. Among the Kwahus, for example, "adult masculinity was signified by marriage" (Miescher 124).

However, the journey to adult masculinity does not end with marriage; it is rather the beginning of the journey, with its own set of rules and challenges. A man can lose his status as an adult masculine figure if he fails to validate his position after marriage because, "historically, masculinity has implied three things about a man: he should be the father to his wife's children, he should be the provider for his wife and children, and he should protect his family" (Nock 6). The majority of married men featured in Ghanaian domestic dramas are seen in the process of performing the above prescribed three roles. The performance of these roles differs largely, depending on a man's geographical location, economic factors, and level of education. In whatever the environment or conditions a man finds himself, he must perform the above roles in order to retain manhood. In the film *Tribal War*, Efo and Koo Kuma, through diverse

means, admonish their male children that they must have children, take care of their families and protect their families against danger. A man who falls short in performing his roles is not only considered a bad husband, he is considered not man enough, and as such may be ridiculed by his immediate family and members of the society. Marriage puts a man in a unique position in society, therefore, he is expected to consistently affirm, reaffirm, and validate his masculinity:

> The young husband is a different social and legal person than he was as a bachelor. He is held to different standards. He is accorded different treatment by friends, family, associates, and strangers. He may legitimately claim greater autonomy and respect than before he married. He has made a public commitment of the most enduring and binding sort. He expects to be treated as mature, stable, productive, and dependable. He has made a public statement about his sexual orientation and does not need to defend it. He has competed in a contest and won the affections of a woman over all other men. His wife has sworn to forgo all others for him. He has succeeded in courtship. He is now a husband and, in certain respects, he is now a "man." (Nock 52)

A young man who gets married is respected in the society; that is why he must be adequately prepared both mentally and economically before he enters into a marriage. He must be a responsible husband to his wife and father to his children by feeding, clothing, and providing shelter for the family. A father must be both physically and psychologically strong to protect and defend his family.

The Journey to Masculinity: Preserving the Old Order

The producers of Ghanaian video films clearly distinguish between the roles of males and females because of their different institutionalized responsibilities. Though women's position has changed during the past couple of decades, it is still evident in majority of contemporary video films that Ghanaian society is a man's world where most women are relegated to the domestic arena as mothers, cooks, and house cleaners. In traditional societies, though women function prominently in the agricultural sector, many of them do not hold titles to land. They work to support their husbands, children, and the extended family but decision making usually is a man's preserve. The home is a social space where gender power relations are reinforced and it is a major arena for the construction of masculinities and femininities. Though the home is considered feminine, or the place of the woman, men are usually the dominant figures because of their roles as breadwinners, decision makers, and authority figures. However, not all males attain masculinity. Society regards some males as man-woman, or a man could be called a woman or described as not a man. Many scholars observe that a person born with a penis does not automatically gain access to masculinity; he has to earn masculinity by performing certain prescribed acts in society (Connell 2000, Gilmore 1990, Kimmel & Aronson 2004, Nock 1998). Nock notes that "masculinity is more than an attribute that males possess automatically by virtue of their anatomy, age, or maturation;

rather, it is something that must be attained or earned" (43). Masculinity is a demand placed on men even if they do not want it because males are expected to become sufficiently masculine before they receive the right to become members of the adult society. Those who do not conform to society's demands suffer consequences ranging from private or public ridicule to being denied access to certain jobs and clubs (Nock 43, 49). The expectations of society impel males to fight against powerful odds in order to attain masculine status. The test for manhood "is found at all levels of socio-cultural development regardless of what other alternative roles are recognized. It is found among the simplest hunters and fishermen, among peasants and sophisticated urbanized peoples; it is found in all continents and environments" (Gilmore 11). Every society, irrespective of social structure, economic or political affiliation and practices, requires that men prove their manhood.

Using *Tribal War 1 & 2*, this chapter examines the position of the father in the traditional Ghanaian society. The duties of the father as the custodian of family traditions and family property, and as economic provider of the family will be explored. This chapter will also analyze relationships between fathers and sons and the positions of wives and daughters. A significant aspect of *Tribal War* is the importance of marriage to men. Due to the important role marriage plays in masculine validation, parents (especially fathers) are very concerned about who their sons marry since a son's marriage can directly affect

a father's status in society. Though marriage bestows adult masculinity on men, a man may lose his masculinity if he does not perform satisfactorily as husband and father. The chapter focuses on the characters Efo Zu and Koo Kuma and examines how the feud between the Ashanti and Ewe families determines the fatherhood practices of these patriarchs and how they transfer these practices to their sons.

Tribal War 1 & 2

Tribal War is a two part film which focuses on men and fatherhood in rural Ghana. Efo Zu and Koo Kuma, heads of the Ewe and Ashanti families respectively, decide to pursue a serious enmity that exists between the two families. The cause of contention between the families, based on ethnic affiliation, is inherited from their forebears. The present generation of fathers does not know why there is enmity between the two families. Both families decide to nurture their hatred for each other because of their ancestors. Koo Kuma swears never to have anything to do with Efo and his family, or the Ewes in general. Efo severely warns his family never to get near Koo Kuma or members of his tribe. The hatred for each other is so strong that when opposing family members meet, they either physically or verbally assault each other. The two family heads, assisted by their wives, consistently reiterate the situation to their children, making the children aware that dealing with the opposing family

constitutes a betrayal of family values.

Unfortunately, Owusu, the first son of Koo Kuma, falls in love with Enyo, Efo's elder daughter. The lovers, aware of the consequences of their relationship, resort to unorthodox means to keep their love a secret. With time, Efo suspects that Enyo is in a relationship with someone from Koo Kuma's family. Lebene, Enyo's elder brother, is instructed to monitor Enyo's movements. When the secret of the lovers is discovered, Koo Kuma vows to kill Owusu, while Efo beats his daughter and locks her in a room. Owusu releases Enyo from her house arrest and they run away to Kumasi, a city far away, to escape the anger of their families. After living in the city for twelve years and becoming a successful business couple, they return to the village with their daughter Dzifa. Boahen and his wife Emefa, who helped Enyo and Owusu to settle in the city, accompany the couple to the village to serve as mediators between the families. At the sight of Owusu and Enyo in the village, old wounds are rekindled with new hostilities. The chief priest intervenes by revealing an old family secret which resolves the conflict.

Fatherhood in Rural Ghana

The opening scenes of this video film set the stage for the love and hatred that engulf the Ewe and Ashanti families. Against the background of a love song rendered in Twi, the film begins with the love story of Owusu and Enyo. The

love birds are resting under a cocoa tree; hugging, kissing, and saying sweet words to each other. The characters move up and down within the frame; later events in the film reveal the significance of the up and down movement; it is symbolic of the uncertainty of their love affair and this sets the tone for the undulating nature of the story. Enyo and Owusu rise from their sitting positions and lie on the ground to profess their love for each other; this happens against a serene background where they are by themselves without any interference from society. The next scene sharply disrupts this calm when the fathers of the two lovers meet at another side of the bush. The interaction between Efo and Koo Kuma presents the bucolic life style where male-headed households form the foundation of society and determine how family life operates in rural Ghana. Koo Kuma is seen casually clearing his path. All of sudden, there is a shrill sound effect denoting danger and heightening the appearance of Efo and his son Lebene. Efo confronts Koo Kuma for cutting a plantain plant that Koo Kuma claims blocks his path. There is a heated argument and Lebene slaps Koo Kuma. When Koo Kuma attempts to retaliate, Efo holds Koo Kuma at gun point. Humiliated and angry, Koo Kuma leaves. This scene is crucial to the development of the film and alerts viewers to the danger which Owusu and Enyo might be in. It also establishes the generational gap between the parents and their children and shows how the younger generation views the animosity between the two families. Efo and Koo Kuma,

as heads of their respective households, are spiritual and political representatives of their families; they exercise absolute authority over their wives and children. Both fathers have created their support system from the members of their families. The choice of the outdoor location of the opening scenes directly identifies how these fathers gain their authority. They are powerful figures in the family who gain authority from agricultural exploits because farming is the main income-generating activity of the families. As the story unfolds, it is clear that every member of the family actively participates in farming to make economic contributions for the survival of the family. Efo and Koo Kuma rule their families with strict rules and regulations; contrary opinions are considered betrayal. The fathers own the family land and run the family business. Out of the produce they gather from the farm, they feed their families and as a result they are able to exert complete authority. As Anthony Rotundo notes, the power of the father is connected to his ownership and control of all family property because "through his control of land, a father could direct the rate at which his sons gained their independence" (65-66). The setting for the opening scenes establishes the power of Efo and Koo Kuma and defines their masculinity and foreshadows the fact that masculinity in rural Ghana depends on viable economic activities of the fathers.

Koo Kuma's anger is still at its peak as the camera leads us into his house to meet his sons Owusu and Bota. The conversation that ensues clearly shows

the father's power over his children and also reveals a disagreement within the family. Owusu does not concur with the bad blood between families and attempts to reason with his father so that peace can prevail. Koo Kuma considers his son's suggestion a betrayal and voices regrets about having him as a first born. The conflict between the two families is the driving force of the film and it is through this conflict that masculinities are constructed and reinforced. As the development of the plot reveals, anyone who does not take part in the hostilities is treated as an enemy and threatened with death. The rural father is responsible for the moral and economic training of his children (especially the sons). Koo Kuma frequently reminds his sons that they are not to have anything to do with Efo and his family. Robert Griswold is right to note that "rural living meant that fathers lived and worked in close proximity to their children. In rural areas, men helped organize the work of the household and introduced sons to the ways and rhythms of farm life ..." (161). The fathers' proximity to home makes it possible for them to monitor their children to make sure that they do not violate the family's rules. Bota works as a blacksmith and Efo's son, Lebene, is a hunter as well as a farmer. Interestingly, Owusu is never featured in the film helping his father in any economic activity. Instead we see his younger brother, Bota, as the father's immediate assistant and as a self-appointed spokesman in promoting the hostilities. It is implied in the film that Bota is a more responsible son than Owusu. Masculinity in the film depends on

support for the feud between the two families. The feud is a place of struggle where outright brute force is displayed. Whoever wins a confrontation is considered as having more power hence deemed more masculine. It is suggested that anyone who does not defend the patriarch of the family puts the patriarch in danger. Since Owusu does not support his father, it becomes necessary to keep him away from the family's economic activity as he has shown he does not have the ability to be in charge. Owusu is strategically kept at the margins of the family matter because he is more likely to compromise the patriarchy of hatred which his family is promoting. On hearing about Koo Kuma's slap from Lebene, Bota quickly takes a pestle and runs to Efo's house to revenge his father's humiliation. In the frame where Bota departs, Owusu is shown taking a bucket and entering the kitchen. The filmmaker deliberately sends Owusu to the kitchen—the room in the house connected to femininity more than any other room. Because Owusu does not support the feud, he is not given any chance within this environment to construct his masculinity. He is positioned in the interior instead of the exterior where men are supposed to display their gallantry. Bota and Lebene are projected as ideal masculine figures, prepared at any time to defend the family name.

Nock explains that marriage "is associated with notions of maturity and thus confers some amount of legitimacy to such a claim. In their married roles as fathers, providers, and protectors, husbands validate themselves as mature

men" (56). Efo and Koo Kuma are successful fathers who perform their breadwinner roles effectively. Family security and economic stability are their major focus. They construct their unique masculinities by working hard on the farm and providing for the immediate family needs. Griswold confirms that "men were the self-anointed leaders of society, the titular and legal heads of families, and the primary locus of economic support for women and children. They represented their families' legal and political interests before the state and oversaw their children's religious upbringing" (161). Fathers are charged with the sole responsibility of ensuring the growth and development of their children (especially male children) into responsible adults. Efo and Koo Kuma train their boys in farming and blacksmithing respectively. The fathers also assume the moral training of their sons. Koo Kuma and Efo believe it is their responsibility to train their children to hate Ashantis and Ewes respectively. On separate occasions, both fathers gather their families and explain to them the reasons why they must hate the opposing tribe. In that instance, hatred, bitterness, tribalism, and nepotism are transmitted to the children. This is a disturbing characteristic of the father figures in the film. Since Koo Kuma and Efo have absolute power over their families they are not answerable to anyone, it is difficult to challenge them even if their wives and children do not agree with their (fathers') beliefs. The fathers' unchallenged rights in the family cause a lot of devastating emotional and physical torture to the rest of the family. The

wife and children of Efo are under his tyrannical control and he sometimes use brute force to exert his authority over the family. Even Bota and Lebene, who support their fathers in the hostilities, are not left out of the tyrannical control of Koo Kuma and Efo.

Efo and Koo Kuma believe in the use of force to retain and maintain their authority over members of their households. One notable nature of the fathers' right Stoltenberg identifies "is the quality of violence required to enforce it, the quality of violence required to perpetuate it, to keep it the form which humans live out their lives, the air they breathe so long as they inhale and exhale" (54). The family becomes a site of oppression of children and women. Efo believes that because he is the head of the family he can do whatever he chooses. He demonstrates his domination over the family through intimidation. Typically, Efo shows his domination when Owusu elopes with Enyo. Efo calls a family meeting and announces that he is going to confront Koo Kuma about Enyo's disappearance. Knowing how hot tempered her husband is, Efo's wife suggests that he should not go. Efo screams at his wife and commands her to shut up. The wife continues to reason with him but he points his finger at her and threatens reprisals. Efo makes his pronouncements with a lot of confidence and the reaction of his wife gives a vivid interpretation to the threat. The countenance of the woman falls immediately and she becomes tongue tied. Though we do not see Efo performing physical violence toward his wife, there

are many allusions that she suffers abuses. In another scene, Efo is proud to tell Lebene how he (Efo) has tamed his wife and encourages Lebene to do the same. Efo tells his son that fathers have absolute control over their families so a man who cannot control his wife and children is a weakling. The ability to maintain power and authority over the members of one's household is a major focus for fathers in the rural world. Adrienne Rich describes patriarchy as the power of the fathers, "a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men—by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labour determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male" (57). The rural women in *Tribal War* live their lives at the mercy of men. They do not question the subordinate position in which society places them. Efo's wife is reduced to the position of a domestic servant who is always poised to do the biddings of her husband. Her thoughts and ideas are not considered important. She is responsible for raising their two daughters according to Efo's demands and expectations. Her domestic responsibilities are outlined by Efo. Whatever goes on well in the family is to the husband's credit and the wife receives the blame for everything that goes wrong. Nukunya explains that "the marital relationship is marked by the complete obedience of the wife. Every wife is expected to obey her husband. He may beat her for disobedience, disorderliness, and any suspicion of unfaithfulness" (*Kinship* 155).

Intimidation and violence are deployed to maintain the man's unchallenged position and to silence other members of the family. John M. Clum mentions that the patriarchal family is "structured on the notion of family hierarchy as the basis of gender order. However immature the patriarch may appear, however out of touch he seems in the domestic economy, his pre-eminent place is unquestioned, and women need to adapt to their secondary position" (25). When Enyo's secret love affair is discovered, Efo blames his wife for training the girls wrongly. He accuses his wife of not being a good mother to their daughters. After Enyo escapes due to the physical abuse she suffers from her father, Efo puts the blame on his wife. The woman is expected to perform her subordinate role satisfactorily in order to enhance Efo's superior image as a responsible father. He is proud of Lebene who obeys him by being violent toward the women in his family, and by showing violence to Koo Kuma's family. The father's overbearing authority in the home is difficult to comprehend "because it permeates everything, even the language in which we try to describe it. It is diffuse and concrete; symbolic and literal; universal, and expressed with local variations which obscure its universality" (Rich 58). The authority Efo and Koo Kuma exert over their families is overwhelming, reducing their women and children to stooges who perform the bidding of their masters, the fathers.

Efo endorses the ideology of separate spheres in his home. He believes that some tasks are the fate of men and others the fate of women. This ideology suggests that women must serve men and women are performing their natural role when they submit to the biddings of men. Efo and Lebene enjoy free domestic labour from their wives. Efo expects Lebene to take a responsible position in the public space whiles the daughters are encouraged to acquire skills of domesticity. A consequence of the separate spheres ideology is that, it relegates women to the domestic space:

> When daily activities are segregated into separate spheres on the basis of gender, men are able to exploit women's labour. Perhaps even more important, when the ideology of separate spheres permeates most of our institutions and governs our conduct of daily life, opportunities for women to achieve outside the home are severely limited. (Coltrane, *Family Man* 27)

Efo believes that his son and daughters occupy separate spheres in life; thereby they need to be treated differently. His main focus is Lebene because, as the first male child, Efo expects his son to grow into a real man. Lebene receives preferential treatment from his father. Efo expects his properties to be transferred to Lebene in the future so he admonishes him to be strong both physically and mentally. Efo is alarmed when he sees Lebene display any form of weakness. Efo harshly reprimands Lebene because he wants Lebene to be a replica of his father. By transferring his property to his male biological descendant, Efo will maintain his family lineage and achieve immortality. Efo's

image will be projected in Lebene. With this in mind, he concentrates his parental efforts on Lebene and leaves the girls to their mother. The film never shows Efo connecting with his daughters as he does with Lebene. Anytime the girls come face to face with their father, it is because of a problem. The girls do not have an intimate relationship with their father; in fact, they are always afraid in his presence. Efo follows the patriarchal system where "families generally teach us that women and men should occupy different places in the social order, relying on the ideology of separate spheres, families continue to raise children 'to be' masculine or feminine based on the reproductive equipment with which they are born" (Adam & Coltrane 232). Enyo and her sister Selase are destined to be the keepers of the home, while Lebene belongs to the public space. The film endorses the separate spheres by featuring the girls only in the domestic arena. In Efo's family, crossing the gender boundary is usually blamed on his wife. The separate spheres ideology promotes men into a position of authority while women remain subordinates, because the "concomitant ideology of 'separate spheres' defined men as alone suited to administer and participate in public and economic life" (Winter 355). Enyo and Selase do not receive training for economic empowerment. Their lives revolve around domesticity and obedience to male authority. Discussing the different spheres ideology in the family, Coltrane writes:

> Like most modern systems of social control, the separate spheres ideal perpetuates an image of the subordinate group (women) as fundamentally different from the dominant group (men). The ideology that accompanies the separate spheres ideal suggests that women are inherently suited to serve men; that they are naturally and happily prepared to perform unpaid labour for the men in return for protection and provision. (*Family Man* 27)

Efo and Koo Kuma train their sons to believe that if women are reluctant to perform their domestic chores, they must be forced to serve the men. The traditional family provides an environment where "men continued to exercise power and control over women sexually, socially, and physically, though often under the name of a religiously sanctioned paternal authority" (Adams & Coltrane 240). Even Lebene and Bota who play subordinate masculine roles in their homes believe it is their right as husbands to control their wives. Whenever the women engage in activities that undermine their husbands' authority, the men violently reprimand them. Efo and Koo Kuma accuse their male children of being weak because the boys do not use excessive violence and intimidation to control their wives. To these fathers, a man who cannot use force to control his wife is not man enough. As Marylyn French observes, domination is an evil thing because it makes people unhappy and creates an atmosphere of mistrust:

> Domination sets up a dynamic whereby a person or group claims superiority to another person or group. This supposed superiority is as necessary to the claimant as air to breathe: the claimant has no identity without it. To demonstrate this superiority, however, the other(s) must

> offer deference or be punished. The deference is granted but it conceals rebelliousness, contempt, and resentment. The two parties to such a relationship cannot under any circumstances have an honest, trusting, and loving relation even if they are husband and wife. The assertion of superiority leads to manipulative behaviour on both sides, isolation and wariness on both sides, and mutual fear. (85)

There is a lot of uncertainty and mistrust in the houses of Efo and Koo Kuma. The men take their families through untold hardship in order to exercise their authority. Marylyn French is right to note that in order to avoid punishment people in subordinate positions offer deference. The children and their mothers do whatever the men command, but examining the scenarios carefully, it can be seen that the deference is not always heartfelt. Lebene supports Efo but later events in the film show that his allegiance to his father is a means by which he attempts to save face and appear tough before others.

Koo Kuma and Efo believe that women are properties who must be controlled and suppressed at every opportunity. Since women are properties they do not have minds of their own. These fathers demonstrate that they own their wives, therefore the women must obey even if they do not agree with the men's point of view. Beauvoir explains that since the woman does not own property, she does not enjoy the dignity of being a person and she forms part of the man's patrimony (83). Stoltenberg also argues that at every stage of a woman's life she is transferred as property from one man to another. Here is how Stoltenberg describes the process of male ownership:

> The reality of male ownership in all human relationships can be seen immediately and most clearly as it affects the lives of humans defined by all culture as female—all humans, that is, who were born without a penis. At no time in a woman's life is she not defined by law and culture as the actual or potential property of someone who is male, someone born *with* a penis. First, as a child, she is owned by a father, the man who owns the flesh of her mother in marriage. That man owns her as daughter until such a time she is possessed carnally and legally by a husband. (55)

Koo Kuma and Efo use both direct and indirect means to teach their sons that it is their responsibility to tame their wives and cause them to submit. The boys readily accept this concept as they insist that their wives obey them without asking questions.

Stepping out of the parameters of the film into a traditional culture such as Ghanaian society, one can argue that because a man pays a dowry, or bridewealth, before getting a woman's hand in marriage, that man believes he has a legitimate authority over that woman. Critics of the dowry payment allude to the fact that a man can consider a woman as property because he has paid for her. Though there are differences from one ethnic group to another, generally men offer drinks, money and other personal properties to obtain a bride. Nukunya notes that "throughout Ghana, and indeed sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, women are traditionally given in marriage through the initiative of their parents, sometimes without their consent, or even knowledge of their future husbands" (*Tradition* 41). The bride price makes men like Efo, Lebene,

Koo Kuma, and Bota regard their wives as properties. Nukunya's point is taken by considering Lebene's marriage to Amenyo in *Tribal War*. We do not see courting and there is no indication that there has been a prior meeting between the couple before marriage. When the woman later threatens to leave the marriage, Lebene laughs sarcastically because he believes the woman is nothing without him so she cannot take a decision on her own and successfully execute it. Stoltenberg is correct when he emphasizes that "to this day, the marriage ceremony is a ritual reminder that title to a woman's body has been transferred from one male owner to another" (55). The bride price and other traditional practices guarantee the man's ownership of the woman. Although some supporters of bride price argue that it is a symbol of respect to the bride's family, men have used the payment of bride price as an excuse to violate women. Quoting a CENSUDI 2001 report, Apusigah notes that "among most Northern cultures, married women are generally treated as 'belongings' of husbands and their household. ... For instance, it is common for Frafra women to remain in abusive relationships because their natal families are unable to pay back the dowry or for fear of losing their children" (14-15). A man's dominant position in the traditional family is supported by traditional cultural practices that relegate women and children to the background. Koo Kuma and Efo gain authority over their families because they are the breadwinners and custodians of the families' properties. The connection between "fatherhood and

breadwinning, for example, has served to legitimate men's monopoly of the most desirable jobs, while consigning women to domestic obligation" (Griswold 161). Koo Kuma and Efo strive to maintain their traditional position at home and use the family feud to direct the running of their houses. Blinded by their traditional beliefs and unchallenged in their absolute authority, Koo Kuma and Efo miserably fail to be ideal masculine figures to their children. The result is that, they produce boys—Lebene and Bota—who cannot be their own men.

Preserving the Old Order

The second part of *Tribal War* features Bota, Owusu, and Lebene in marital relationships. For the purpose of this discussion, I will examine the marital relations of Lebene and Bota to identify reasons why they perform miserably and cannot construct the socially prescribed masculinity through marriage. Bota and Lebene are the favourites of their fathers; as such it is ironical that neither can build and maintain a definite masculine identity. Efo travels to another village and brings a wife for Lebene, while we see Bota courting Minta. Minta is hesitant about marrying Bota because of the quarrel between Koo Kuma and Efo's families. Since their domestic conditions do not change after they marry and produce children, it is difficult for Lebene and Bota to differentiate between childhood and adulthood. Although marriage is

associated with "the assumption of adult responsibilities, emancipation from parents, termination of formal (legal) parental obligations, and independence from others" (Nock 71), Bota and Lebene do not have an independent economic source, and therefore cannot attain adult masculinity. We still see Bota working with Koo Kuma; there is no indication that he is working for himself. He still uses his father's tools and receives instructions from his father. In the same way, Lebene is never featured in a self-sustaining economic activity; he appears to remain under the tutelage of Efo. A married man is expected to establish his own family. The boys operate in their fathers' shadows and society judges them through the prism of their fathers. Lebene and Bota cannot maintain their marriages because their wives lose respect for them. Men that are still answerable to their fathers are impotent as far as family authority is concerned. Lebene and Bota suffer serious identity crises because they cannot locate, defend, and maintain unique masculine identities. There are many scenes in the film where Bota and Lebene are seen in confrontation with their wives, they repeat the very lines their fathers often use. In one scene we see Lebene's wife, Amenyo, in the kitchen peeling cassava. Lebene walks quietly behind her and tickles her. Amenyo jumps for joy at seeing her husband. They talk to each other about their day and as Amenyo narrates an incident that happened between her and Bota, Lebene becomes agitated. He warns Amenyo never to have anything to do with any of the Ashantis. When Amenyo demands

an explanation, Lebene tells her that "my father brought you here to cook for me and not to ask questions. Anything I say is final." This response is similar to what Efo tells his wife. Hence, Lebene is seen directly mirroring his father without considering the consequences of his actions. In another scene, also dealing with the warfare between the two families, Bota insists that Minta must obey him because he is her husband. Minta vehemently insists that she cannot become part of a feud she does not understand. Bota eventually becomes an object of scorn to his wife, as Koo Kuma maintains absolute control over him. Lebene and Bota fail to achieve adult masculinity due to their particular circumstances which illustrates how marriage does not necessarily usher a man into adult masculinity. Marriage, "for men is an ongoing enterprise of self-definition, presentation of self, and choice of partner. The soft boundaries around marriages strengthen, reinforce, and refine the consistency of the options that, together, produce gender" (Nock 59). This ongoing self-definition works against Bota and Lebene because they keep trying to define themselves through their fathers. Their identity crises become intense when they have to decide between allegiance to their fathers or to their wives. After the boys get married they seem to stop growing because of the manipulation of their lives by their fathers.

Bota and Lebene are the favourites because they support their fathers in whatever they do, good or bad. However, independence is impossible without

the fathers' permission. The fathers monitor the sons by controlling the kind of economic activities the boys engage in and the type of people they associate with. The boys cannot select their own marriage partners without their fathers' consent. After marriage, Lebene and Bota continue to reside in the family house with the parents. This makes them incapable of taking charge of their lives and validating their masculinities. In addition, the fathers interfere with the way Bota and Lebene relate to their wives. Thus, Bota and Lebene are unable to head their own households. Bota and Lebene occupy subordinate masculine positions because they are answerable to their fathers. Efo and Koo Kuma use their sons to validate their own hegemonic masculine positions. While the presence of the boys in the family enhances the image of the fathers, Bota and Lebene suffer serious retrogression in the development of their masculine status. Efo and Koo Kuma are solely responsible for ushering their sons into manhood so any undue delay in this duty adversely affects the children. The rural family system is a "system of control, as well as a centre of production, and both functions reinforced the father's authority and shaped family relationships" (Coltrane, *Family Man* 270). Though marriage confers adult masculinity on men, Bota and Lebene do not attain adult masculinity because their fathers overshadow them. In *Tribal War*, the fathers are unable to relinquish parental authority so that the sons can claim their independence. The fathers insist on their boys following strict rules because a male child's

deviation from his father's authority will render the father less masculine. Because of economic necessities, the sons are unable to move out from under parental authority. As a result of Bota's inability to construct his own masculine identity, Minta takes over the relationship and occupies the position of authority because that is the only way she can survive her husband's hostilities.

Who's got the Power? Female Masculinity

Jean Bobby Noble argues that, contrary to conservative ideas which posit that people with male bodies biologically have both a man's personality and a man's privilege to exert power, during the late twentieth century, "anatomy, identity, and authority no longer function as synonymous for each other. Thus, no man is automatically granted the status of manhood" (x). Bota's manhood is put to the test when his wife disagrees with him and behaves contrary to his demands. After observing her husband for sometime, Minta comes to the conclusion that Bota is not man enough since he does not have a voice in his own home. An incident at the village market strips Bota of his masculinity thereby transferring power to Minta. It is afternoon and Minta visits Amenyo at the market; the two women discuss their dilemma about the animosity between the two families. Engrossed in the conversation, they are interrupted by Bota. He walks majestically to where the women are seated and, leaning on a tree nearby he asks Minta why she is talking with Amenyo. He sharply and loudly orders

Minta to go home. Minta stands to leave. Though she does not say anything, while standing to leave, her body position and facial expressions denote resentment. Bota demands that Minta take the lead so that he can follow her—another attempt by Bota to assume authority. Minta, however, refuses to lead and when Bota realizes that his wife spites him, he slaps her twice. Minta takes few steps backward and forward and retaliates with two slaps. At this moment, Bota realizes that his masculinity is at stake and he needs to quickly redeem it or face public scandal. The setting of the scene demands that Bota take action against his wife's insubordination because already their shouting has attracted children to the scene. Minta's lack of respect for him has now moved from the domestic space to the public arena. He rushes at Minta but the woman quickly counteracts the man's move and pushes him down, sits on him, and gives him a sound beating. The position of the bodies in the frame activates the change in power positions as Minta sits on Bota and children of the village run to the scene to witness the feminization of Bota. Minta continues to humiliate Bota when she slaps him several times with his sandals. After much struggle, he frees himself and runs off barefooted. Minta is featured in the video film as a strong character of masculine capacities proving that "masculine women challenge the 'naturalness' and biological essentialism of the sex/gender system" (Noble xii).

Minta disrespects Bota because she believes her husband is too cowardly to challenge his father's archaic ideas. After the incident at the village market, Bota becomes sober and lives in fear of his wife. Koo Kuma complains several times that Bota is not being man enough as he has given his wife freedom to voice her ideas. In Koo Kuma's house, women are to be seen and not heard. Koo Kuma believes Bota must use force and violence to tame Minta. During a family meeting, Koo Kuma, in anger, slaps Minta; the woman hits Koo Kuma back with a cane while Bota looks on helplessly. Minta's act is a disgrace to the family because a man is considered feminine if he is overpowered by a woman, especially through beatings. Minta's act therefore reduces the masculine image of Koo Kuma and Bota and renders them effeminate. From Minta's entrance to her exit in the film, she demonstrates that masculinity is not always about manhood—it is socially prescribed and can be troubled when the other sex tips it over. This is what Minta does in this act of inevitable aggression. The problem with this family occurs because Bota is reduced to a subordinate masculine position by Koo Kuma and Minta expects Bota to assume the position of an adult masculine figure who is in control of his own house. Bota's marriage fails because he is unable to play both hegemonic and subordinate masculine roles simultaneously. Bota's marriage fails because he lacks the will to state his masculine presence in front of his father. On the other hand he could have moved out of his father's house after marriage. Koo Kuma assumes that as long

as Bota resides in the family house, he is answerable to the patriarch of the family. With the appearance of women like Minta on the traditional marriage scene, the absolute male authority and domination is challenged, paving a way for the emergence of new family dynamics in the society. Minta and Amenyo also illustrate the changing family system by walking out of their abusive marriages. With all the male characters in the village failing miserably in their duties as husbands and fathers, it is expedient to carefully examine Owusu's development as he journeys on the path to masculinity. Just as he does not support the family hostility, his ideology about marriage relations, too, is different. He succeeds at a great cost.

The Battle of Choice

The first challenge Owusu faces on his journey to adult masculinity is the choice of a marriage partner. The family unit in the video film, as it reflects life in Ghana and other African cultures, includes the extended family system. The extended family comprises of relatives who trace their ancestry to one source and who have a sense of responsibility to one another. The individual member of the family is "brought up to think of himself or herself always and primarily in relation to the group of his or her blood relatives and to seek to bring honor to the group. It is the responsibility of every member of the family to seek and maintain the cohesion of the family" (Gyekye 75). It is therefore the

responsibility of every male child to select a marriage partner that will enhance the family's image and sustain the family's social status. *Tribal War 1 & 2* explore the difficulties Enyo and Owusu encounter as a result of their love for each other. Enyo belongs to the Ewe tribe and Owusu is an Ashanti. Enyo and Owusu cannot get married because each of their father considers the intended's family to consist of weak, wicked, and callous members, quite unsuitable to marry his child. The lovers are subjected to emotional, verbal, and physical assaults. At the end of part one of the film, the lovers elope from the village.

The common denominator underlying video films such as *Tribal War, Lost Hope, Web,* and *Yaa Asantewaa,* among others, is that the resistance of parents to their children's partners has to do with power, domination, and superiority. The men at the centre of these conflicts are put in awkward positions because they have to choose between their families and the women they want to marry. Getting married is a way to authenticate adult masculinity, but men must fight to defend their choice of partner or be considered effeminate if they yield to the pressure of their parents and other relatives. If a man fails to defend his choice, he is rendered powerless before his woman, her family, and her friends. It is in "their marriages, and by their marriages, men define and display themselves as masculine. Marriage is one social arrangement that both creates and reproduces gender. ... The marriages that men and women create are environments for masculine identity and expression" (Nock

58-59). Because of his love affair with Enyo, Owusu loses the respect of his family; and worse, he loses the privileges accorded to the first born son. The place of the first born son is a privileged position in Ghana's patriarchal system. Being a first born son bestows masculinity on the boy-child at birth but as the child grows, he needs to live by the precepts of the family expectations in order to enjoy this position. Owusu is torn between two opposing forces that are difficult to fight. A man who defies his family and marries the woman of his choice is considered to have been bewitched by the woman, and hence been reduced to a man-woman. Either or both families may refuse to recognize such a marriage and the man involved in the conflict may not acquire adult masculinity. The choice of a marriage partner is a stage in a man's life where his masculinity is tried and tested.

The controversy of partner choices arises especially when there is a substantial family inheritance at stake or if ethnic status is an issue. Parents who coerce their sons to marry or not to marry a particular woman often have some wealth at stake to which the boy is entitled. For example, Auntie Vida in *Lost Hope* threatens to disown her only son Maxwell if he marries Matilda. Maxwell finds himself in a difficult position because he needs his mother's wealth in order to get himself established and perform his masculine responsibilities. On the other hand, in order not to be called effeminate and rendered less masculine, he must be strong enough to defy his mother and marry Matilda.

Being the first born, Owusu in *Tribal War 1&2* stands the risk of losing his father's land to his younger brother if he marries Enyo. Hence, Owusu, without financial support, is considered a weak person who cannot merit masculine status. Also, as a first born, Owusu is expected to become custodian of the family traditions so his affiliation with Enyo means betrayal of the family. Throughout the first part of the film, Owusu is featured in situations where he is either hiding or running away from his pursuers. Despite the challenges, he struggles through the conflict and marries the woman of his choice. For Owusu, being married to Enyo is what defines his masculinity. The fight to marry his dream woman is not a battle for love alone, but becomes an avenue for him to defend and validate his masculinity. The journey to masculinity involves the following:

> Duty, proofs, trials—these words indicate that there is a real task to be accomplished to become a man. Manhood is not bestowed at the outset; it must be constructed, or let us say "manufactured". A man, therefore, is a sort of artefact, and as such he always runs the risk of being found defective. There may be a defect in the manufacture, a breakdown in the machinery of virility, in short, a failed man. The enterprise is so uncertain that success deserves to be noticed. (Badinter 2)

Ghanaian video films portray men who fall victim to the schemes of their parents and marry a particular woman out of parental pressure as weaklings. Such men never succeed in marriage. Such men are considered defective masculine products because they lack the components required for the

masculine manufacturing process. A man is expected to fight through thick and thin to secure the love of his life. The fight is the fight for love, freedom, and above all masculinity because marriage translates boys into men. In *Lost Hope*, Maxwell faces such a dilemma. If he agrees to marry Matilda, he will be respected among his peers and Matilda's family for being man enough to defy his mother's rage and choose the love of his life instead of wealth. On the other hand, he will be ostracized by his own family, thereby losing his inheritance. He miserably fails the trial. He dumps Matilda and marries Leena. The couple never enjoy a good marriage because they are not compatible and Maxwell never loved Leena. The marriage results in childlessness, which becomes a major site for domestic squabbles causing both of them to commit adultery. Maxwell later discovers that he is impotent and, thus, cannot impregnate his wife. Maxwell's childlessness is presented as a punishment because he falls victim to his mother's conspiracy. Because Maxwell is not able to defend his choice, follow his heart, and stand strong for Matilda, he is portrayed as a defective masculine artefact whose construction process fails due to external problems he cannot handle.

On the other hand, Owusu in *Tribal War* quickly detects that living in a hostile environment will not augur well for his transition from boyhood to manhood so he elopes with Enyo to Kumasi. Running away to the city enables the couple to enjoy the freedom that the city offers as against the harsh dictates

of the village. As Badinter notes, the enterprise of producing an ideal masculinity is so uncertain that success ought to be noticed. Owusu and Enyo's story is like a fairytale in which the protagonists live happily ever after. Owusu performs his first heroic act when he rescues Enyo from her house arrest. Enyo is locked in her room and Efo is sitting in front the room with a gun making sure that Owusu does not see Enyo again. In the scene where Owusu rescues Enyo is juxtaposition between Efo's violence and Owusu's peaceful nature. Owusu's softness serves as a great advantage here and since his type of masculinity is not for public display, the scene is set in the night to highlight this symbolism. Without any weapons to counteract Efo's gun, Owusu resorts to performing mental tricks on Efo and succeeds in taking Enyo away. By such simple acts of bravery, Owusu proves that masculinity does not always depend on physical agility or the ability to intimidate others. From this point on, Owusu's character development becomes stronger and stronger. Though Owusu's act might be considered a sign of weakness, it is necessary for him to assume such a seemingly weak position in order to gain masculinity. The ability to know that he needs the right environment in order to grow makes him a more likeable masculine character in the film.

The major problem with Owusu has to do with his inability to identify with any role model in the village. The fact that he does not condone the family feud causes the rest of the family to see him as a betrayer and he is perceived as

a weakling. As the problem escalates, Owusu becomes confused. Standing up against an age-old tradition of hatred, Owusu is displaying a strong masculine trait but because he is standing alone, he thinks of himself as a failure. The absence of an appropriate male role model, Arthur Brittan observes, causes men to "suffer from an acute sense of gender confusion. A healthy gender identity requires a proper identification with some kind of father-figure" (25). It is therefore expedient for Owusu to leave the hostile environment of the village in order to succeed on the journey to masculinity. Owusu's action suggests that the development of one's masculine identity is more difficult in a hostile environment. In the city, Mr. Boahen provides a role model for Owusu as he directs Owusu in his family life and in business. Mr. Boahen, an Ashanti married to an Ewe woman, provides the ideal image for Owusu's development. In the city, the couple set up a business and work hard to attain economic independence. Returning to the village after twelve years, Owusu becomes a man of reputable class because he has a successful business venture in the city. He comes back to the village well dressed and driving a fashionable model car, with his wife and daughter. He is far better off economically than his peers still living in the village.

Bota and Lebene, stagnated in the village, have used the years to sustain the feud between the families; hence, they could not develop themselves in any other way. Though the film portrays Owusu's success as being a result of

running away from the village, the film does not suggest that villagers have to migrate to the city before they can succeed. The film, however, iterates that for male children to become responsible, independent adults, and to fulfil their social roles and responsibilities as husbands and fathers, they must become economically empowered. Owusu's economic independence makes it possible for him to be the head of his house, just like his father and Efo. Owusu's elopement with Enyo implies the limitation of a father's absolute power and Owusu's financial success shows that a son can become economically independent without his father's contribution. The relaxed relationship between Owusu and Enyo further proves the changing position of women and ushers the society into new fatherhood practices.

The Balanced Father

The most dynamic fatherhood style constructed in *Tribal War* is that of Owusu. He and Enyo settle in Kumasi to have a family. Owusu, who at this point has achieved a certain level of success, consciously creates a balance between his work and time for the family. He participates actively in the day to day life of his daughter and he considers his wife a co-head of the home. Rotundo refers to this mode of fathering as "participant fatherhood":

> A participant father is immersed in the tasks of day-to-day childcare. His wide ranging involvement flows from the assumption that after childbirth there are few tasks that cannot be shared interchangeably by mother and father. But participant fatherhood means more than just

> fulfilling physical responsibilities to children—it means intensive emotional involvement with them too. (74)

A major characteristic of the kind of fatherhood Owusu displays revolves around his ability to give Dzifa the same level of attention that boys usually receive. Unlike Efo, Owusu does not leave raising his daughter in the hands of his wife. Gender prescription and discrimination does not form part of Owusu's fatherhood practices. The ability to blur gender division plays a key role in participant fatherhood. A man who practices this mode of fathering is required to avoid sex-role stereotypes in dealing with his children. To practice this model of fatherhood "demands new patterns of feeling; it entails different notions of male and female; and it requires men to surrender substantial authority to their wives in return for a greater measure of involvement with their children" (Rotundo 74-75). The necessity for men to surrender part of their authority to women is a major obstacle to participant fatherhood in a society where women and children are to be seen but not heard. To be an effective participant father demands an increase in women's authority in the home so that women can call for greater participation from their partners. There are many scenes in the film showing the cordial relationship Owusu shares with his family. For instance, there is such a scene close to the end of the film, before the family makes the trip to the village. It is morning, Owusu, Enyo, and Dzifa are at the table having breakfast. The seating arrangement within the frame and the use of a round

dinning table enhances the blurring of power structures in the scene. None of the characters is positioned to occupy a more important place than the others. Owusu breaks the silence at the table by suggesting that it is time they visit their parents in the village. He asks what Enyo thinks about the suggestion. From preceding scenes, it is obvious that Owusu surrenders part of the family's source of income to Enyo and empowers her to fully participate in decision making in the home. Enyo is not a passive wife who only answers to what her husband says. Owusu trusts her judgment on every issue so he does not closely monitor her activities. The absence of violence in the home creates a platform for open communication and respect for each member of the household. Without challenging violence against women "the balance of emotional and physical power perpetuates the domination of men over women in household decision making and reduces women's potential to cover their own hidden resources" (Rotundo 77-78). Accepting her husband's suggestion, Enyo agrees that they should allow Mr. Boahen and his wife to accompany them to the village. This is a unanimous decision reached between husband and wife.

Though the film projects Owusu as the ideal father, the filmmaker does not engage in propaganda by encouraging fathers to adopt this model of fatherhood. The film rather draws viewers' attention to the contradictions within society, which makes participant fatherhood a difficult task. The video film constructs egalitarian roles for males and females against a background

that is male dominated; it proposes that society redefine masculinity. It also proposes that men must be willing to create a balance between private and public spaces. Nock agrees that the ability to reconcile the private and the public lives of the balanced father is a major challenge. Nock asks: "How will men successfully integrate the new aspects of intimate family life with their engagement with, or membership in, public social roles" (132)? The difficulty in balancing public and private roles arises when masculinity is measured by the ability to control one's family. Efo and Koo Kuma are focused on the feud between the Ewes and Ashantis. Devoted to preserving their positions in the old family animosities, they are emotionally distant from their children. Lebene and Bota, too, cannot develop emotional connections with their partners because they are blinded by tribal affiliations. Owusu moves a step beyond petty quarrels to create an identity for himself, hence, masculinity.

Though participant fatherhood seems to be the ideal fatherhood model, it is only men who have flexible working hours that can afford to spend a good deal of time at home. Rigid work schedules do not permit men to be effective participant fathers. Unless there is a change in work schedules, many fathers desiring to participate actively in the lives of their children will have to push their desire to the margins (Rotundo 77). It is necessary for the issue regarding work schedules to be well examined. Owusu is a successful family man because he owns a private business and has the freedom to divide his time between

work and family. If the new fatherhood roles demand that fathers be actively involved in shaping the personality and development of their children, then it is necessary that fathers like Koo Kuma and Efo with domineering patriarchal ideas become flexible fathers who are sensitive to the appropriate emotional satisfaction and psychological development of their sons and daughters. These fathers need emotional competence to be participant fathers. Efo and Koo Kuma lack "the emotional skills necessary to be deeply and expressively involved with their children and others have been too thoroughly ingrained with the 'male' values of ambition and achievement to devote much time to substantial daily childcare" (Rotundo 76-77). Besides Owusu, the priest is another character in the film who is represented as an ideal masculine figure.

The Priest: Weak but Powerful

Part one of *Tribal War* show the atrocities Enyo and Owusu have endured from their families. At a point when they realize their lives are in danger and they have no hope of getting redress for their calamity, they decide to visit Nana the traditional priest for guidance. The priest provides insight into the source of the dispute between the two families. However, Owusu and Enyo are cautioned not to reveal what they have learned. A visit to the priest is very typical when people find themselves in trouble because "in time of great distress many Africans turn to God in desperation. He is the final resort, the last court of

appeal..." (Parrinder 24). The priest serves as the mediator between man and God and it is through him that people consult God. It is during the last appearance of the priest in the closing moments of the film that the masculinity of the priest is brought to light. Owusu and Enyo return to the village after sojourning in the city for twelve years. At their appearance, old wounds are rekindled and Efo asks them out of the house. Since pleadings with Efo fall on deaf ears, Enyo and Owusu with Mr. Boahen and his wife leave for Koo Kuma's house. Still fuming with anger, Efo lies in his lazy chair smoking his pipe. The chief priest enters the house to the amazement of Efo. Efo blinks several times to make sure he is seeing right. The chief priest commands Efo to follow him. Efo follows without question. This is the first instance in the film where Efo takes instructions from another person. Though the chief priest is looking old and rugged, he has an aura of respectability. The scene cuts to Koo Kuma's yard where the camera leads Owusu and his entourage to the house. When Koo Kuma sees his son, he grabs a machete and flies at him. The timely intervention of Koo Kuma's wife and Bota prevents the murder. Tension is very high and there is a lot of commotion. In the midst of the chaos, the camera leads the chief priest, Efo, and Lebene to the scene. At the appearance of the priest, everything comes to a halt and there is a long pause. The priest takes over the proceedings. The power and authority of the priest comes from the metaphysical world so he does not need permission from any human in order to operate. His masculinity

is not connected to anything physical hence he is above all flesh. The masculinity of Efo and Koo Kuma is briefly put on hold and their egos are deflated. For the first time, the two men look into each other's eyes without hostility. Though Koo Kuma calms down at the appearance of the priest, he is still holding his machete. The priest gives him a gentle look and the machete begins to drop; finally it is lowered completely. Throughout the film, the machete has been used several times by Koo Kuma to protect and defend his masculinity. To lower it in front of the priest signifies the lowering of his male ego and, hence, his masculinity. He becomes a vulnerable figure as the present environment does not permit him to use violence. Similarly, Efo is standing face to face before Koo Kuma for the first time without any weapon. The body posture and composition of these men denote perplexity at the sudden appearance of the priest, but they do not have the courage to ask questions or refuse his orders. Owusu and Enyo are aware of what the priest is going to reveal.

Through a flashback technique, the priest steps back into history and tells the story of how the enmity between the two tribes began. It is significant to see the priest at the centre of the flashback enhancing the timelessness of his position and place in the society. He does not only know the truth of the matter but he is actively involved in making history and preserving the ancient landmarks. In retelling the story, the priest performs a dual role as a priest and

also as a raconteur of the community who has deep insight into historical events. It is worth noting that "Wisdom, knowledge, life experience, and the ability to foresee what will happen and offer advice are indeed the qualities of the elderly. The fact that one has lived a long time means that one has seen a lot of things and began to understand how they are connected" (Geest 440). The priest at this point serves as the bridge between the old and the new generations and at the same time he carries an air of graciousness. The way his presence brings all animosity to a halt makes his story even more significant. All the major characters in the video film are at this meeting. The priest takes the centre stage while others in the frame look on mesmerized. The priest assumes the position of the omniscient one as others listen to him. At the end of the narration, the setting returns to the present and all the other characters look bewildered. Before the priest exits, he commands all of them to live in peace. None of the characters challenge or question his command because: "The priest is a respected person in the community. He stands between the deities and the people. They make their requests to the deities through him and he receives the reply. His word is final. His commands are obeyed. ... He closed all discussions with his word, for it was not his word: it was the word of the god all served" (Sarpong 18). The priest represents the epitome of the ideal masculine figure; he has all authority and does not need to prove it. His body is fragile and his speech sometimes not coherent but his physical characteristics do not take away

from his power. He does not need to shout in order to be heard; he does not need a weapon to instil fear into others, he is revered. The film supports Sarpong's observation that the priest has the last word at all gatherings. The film comes to an end after he leaves the scene. Every activity after his departure follows the instructions he has issued. His revelation brings to light the futility of masculinity. The revelations destroy the male egos and expose the stupidity of pursuing a family feud. The conclusion of the film indicates that what we call masculinity is simply a figment of our imagination. The end of the film is the beginning of life for the male characters involved in the feud. Everything they lived for in the past is shattered. The dominance they built around themselves is brought to naught. They will have to learn to construct non-violent masculinities since their lives have been committed to absurdity. Efo approaches his daughter and apologizes; the power structure has turned. He is at the receiving end now. The fathers apologize to their children and to the opposing families. Finally, Efo and Koo Kuma embrace, and in their embrace the picture freezes as the credits roll. They are looking into each others' faces; on the one hand, it is a look of peace but on a deeper level, they seem to be looking for answers from each other as to how to construct their masculinities. Their expressions are vacuous; neither seems to have a clue as what to do next. They have lived their lives pursuing falsehood, and now is the time to begin all over.

Conclusion

The home is an important place where men and the performance of their masculinities are tried and tested. Men attain adult masculinity through marriage; after marriage, society expects them to father children and provide for their various households. A man who is not economically self-sufficient is bound to suffer an identity crisis and retrogression in personal growth. It is therefore crucial for rural fathers to empower their adult children and grant them independence as soon as they are of age. The breadwinner role men play gives them undue advantage over their wives. Irrespective of the fatherhood styles that are required and performed in these video films, the male breadwinner role is used as a tool to dominate and exploit women. Women are portrayed as housewives and they have limited access to the market place because men are in charge of the public space. Even women who work and contribute significantly financially to the home are condemned to be the labourers at home while men enjoy free domestic services. Though some fathers like Owusu participate actively in domestic affairs and raising their children, many family dramas produced do not endorse men who indulge in such "feminine" roles. Most films depict the husband as the head of the house who must enjoy free domestic services from his wife and children. Economic empowerment of women is necessary if their authority is to increase in the home. Owusu's relationship with Enyo is laudable; the couple sees each other

as partners whose abilities complement each other. Characters like Efo Zu and Koo Kuma use their position as family heads to exert authority over their family members without consideration for the feelings of others in the household. They do not have any emotional connection with their children, hence, they lack the needed skills to play a protective role in the family. When it comes to the issues of security, these men use the opportunity to exhibit their hypermasculine tendencies rather than to fight for the protection of the family. They seem to have lost touch of the realities surrounding them. Children—sons and daughters—need to be connected to their fathers both physically and emotionally; these two ingredients are missing in the homes of authoritative males who are geared towards inflicting punishment rather than seeing the proper growth of their children. Paul R. Amato's admonition will do fathers like Efo and Koo Kuma a lot of good:

> Parental control is harmful. ... if it is enforced with coercive punishment, such as hitting. Furthermore, as children grow into adolescence, it is necessary for parents to relax their degree of regulation. If parents are too restrictive, adolescents do not have opportunities to develop new forms of competence, profit from their mistakes, and learn to accept responsibility for their own decisions. Excessive control may also generate feelings of resentment toward parents, thus eroding parent-child affection. (245)

Enyo and Owusu suffer a great deal of mental and physical abuse from their fathers and were it not for the strong love they have for each other they could have lost their lives. Even Bota and Lebene consistently suffer the wrath of their

fathers whenever they deviate from the path the fathers have set. As we see in the video film, the boys suffer identity crises as they cannot play both dominant and subordinate masculinities simultaneously.

When fathers think providing economically for the family is all they have to do, they fail to consider other important matters not related to finances. Fathers must work hand-in-hand with their female partners in the training of children. The woman should not receive all the blame when something goes wrong while the man receives the victory plaque when everything is right. When fathers use the home as an arena for asserting their masculinity, they cause more harm than good.

Tribal War is yet another video film which proves that those who chase masculinity never attain it. It also shows that masculinity is a journey not a destination; it is always under construction. Masculinity, as projected by the priest and Owusu, proves that it does not depend on physiology and the ability to dominate. It will be a laudable venture to encourage more fathers to become participant fathers like Owusu since that style of fatherhood positively affects many areas of the family structure. It is undeniable that men and women will continue to be parents, hence the importance of creating the avenue for men to become participant fathers and learn to create non-violent masculinities.

CHAPTER 2

HALLELUJAH MASCULINITIES: CREATING THE BALANCE AT HOME, CHURCH, AND WORK

> *Great men are great fathers. The basis of a superior man lies in the knowledge of God as his superior. A great father is one who looks to the example of his heavenly father and strives to translate that model to his relationship with his children. When men have a sense of meaning, direction, and purpose for their lives, they bless their families with a heritage of love that permeates everything, including society. For the church not to be involved in such a mission and a ministry would be treason.* (Eberly 37)

From Roman Catholicism to Pentecostal-Charismatic

Christianity in Africa, John Mbiti believes, "is so old that it can rightly be described as an indigenous, traditional and African religion" (229). It is unquestionable that Christianity plays a major role in every phase of life in many African societies. In Ghana, Roman Catholic missionaries were the first Christian missionaries to arrive in the late 15th century with Portuguese traders to what was then the Gold Coast. Other missionary groups from Western Europe and North America subsequently followed. A clash of interests occurred between the natives and missionaries at this time because Christianity was regarded as an alien culture. The missionaries referred to the culture of the people as heathen, demonic, primitive and unscientific. Becoming a Christian required the rejection of every form of the new believer's traditional religious practices, and the acceptance of what was a Western god. This engendered suspicion among the natives, and resistance toward accepting the gospel. The

missionaries' efforts were therefore rather futile, explaining the near complete absence of Christianity in the Gold Coast at the beginning of the 18th century (Amanor, "Pentecostalism"). However, later attempts made by the Church of England, Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Christian Mission and the Bremen Mission yielded considerable results as the natives began to pay heed to the gospel. Missionary activity in the country was concurrent with colonial occupation, so the two were often regarded as synonymous. Various missionary groups established their church denominations, leading to a diversity of Christian worship in the country, and fierce competition for membership. Christianity expanded rapidly through the establishment of schools, health institutions, agriculture, trade, and transportation. The missionaries were also involved in linguistic studies as they considered the acquisition of the local languages an asset to the propagation of the gospel and trade. Some of the more dominant local languages (e.g., Twi, Ewe, Ga) were analyzed and put to phonetic alphabets, allowing for the compilation of dictionaries and textbooks, and eventually for the translation of the Bible into these local languages. These innovations resulted in tremendous growth in church membership, as well as new church establishment. Examples of early churches in the country include the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Methodist Church, and the Anglican Church.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Evangelical Pentecostal churches

began to emerge especially in the southern part of the country. According to Jones Amanor, all those who believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit are considered Pentecostal. This account is documented in the New Testament of the Holy Bible. These people believe that salvation is followed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, usually evidenced in speaking in tongues ("Pentecostalism"). Early Pentecostal believers were ridiculed and scorned because of their radical beliefs and unconventional religious practices. As their activities did not conform to those of traditional mainline churches, they were often seen as deviating from formal Christian practices, and many were therefore ostracized from society. Examples of early Pentecostal churches include the Assemblies of God Church, the Church of Pentecost, Elim Pentecostal Church, the Christ Apostolic Church, and the Apostolic Church. These churches were initially treated as agents of the devil, and people were cautioned not to have anything to do with them. Pentecostal churches did attract attention, however, as institutions that preached messages of healing and deliverance, and whose members often experienced dramatic positive lifestyle changes. New converts were encouraged to surrender their lives totally to Jesus and break away from traditional religious customs which were seen as works of the devil. Pentecostal churches experienced rapid growth because they appeared to have ready answers for the daily challenges that people faced. Birgit Meyer notes that Pentecostal churches in Ghana "have a strong appeal both in rural and urban

areas and to members of all classes. Many people initially approach a Pentecostalist church in order to solve problems related to health and wealth, and in many cases move from one church to another until the desired result is achieved" ("Make a Complete Break" 320).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, a new phase of Pentecostal Christianity emerged in the form of "new autonomous Pentecostal churches." These are often distinguished from the churches of established Pentecostal denominations like the Assemblies of God by applying the term "charismatic" (Gifford, "Ghana Charismatic" 24). Rosalind Hackett differentiates between traditional Pentecostal and charismatic churches when she notes that "in Ghana, the term 'Pentecostal' refers to the older churches (dating from the 1930s and often of Western Provenance), while 'charismatic' is applied to the newer (post 1970, referred to by some Western scholars as 'neo-Pentecostal'), locally generated movements and ministries whose focus is healing, prosperity, and experience" (259). It is difficult to distinguish between the two sectors since their practices are actually identical. Followers in both groups believe in the born again experience, speaking in tongues, and divine healing, and both place emphasis on personal and congregational prayer. Joel Robbins describes Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity as "the form of Christianity in which believers receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and have ecstatic experiences such as speaking in tongues, healing, and prophesying...." (117). Christian Action

Faith Ministries, the International Central Gospel Church, the Fountain Gate Chapel, and the Word Miracle Church are but a few examples of Charismatic churches. An important feature of these churches is their use of the media in propagating the gospel. Sermons are recorded in both audio and video formats for sale; the use of video films in the delivery of services and special programs is encouraged. They also promote the sale of religious magazines, newsletters, and books written by their pastors or pastors of affiliated churches.

Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity is presently the most vibrant religious movement in Ghana. These churches flourish because they provide avenues for people to experience a power higher than themselves. These churches have become a new community for members and provide social functions such as arranging naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. These churches thrive because "they claim to have answers to Ghanaians' existential problems and especially to their most pressing existential problem, economic survival" (Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity* ix). The church has become the only solution in a place where military and civilian governments have failed the masses, where financial hardship exists despite an economic adjustment program; the expression *only God can help us* often seems appropriate under these conditions. Charismatic churches are thus appealing to a wide range of people. Their success as "a globalizing movement," Robbins notes,

> is attested to not only by its rapid growth, but also by the range of social

> contexts to which it has spread. Appearing throughout the world in urban and rural areas, among emerging middle classes and, most spectacularly, among the poor, it has been deeply engaged by many populations that otherwise remain only peripherally or tenuously involved with other global cultural forms. (118)

Charismatic churches in Ghana employ a great number of means to connect with the masses and share the gospel of Christ with them. Preaching is not limited to church services – church members are encouraged to develop close ties with non-members, using public and private spaces such as buses, taxis, schools, offices, prisons, and hospitals to propagate the gospel. In Charismatic churches, "anointing and spiritual empowerment override theological training or the charisma of office. Heroic, charismatic, even authoritarian, figures do rise up to provide the necessary leadership and mediation of power" (Hackett 262).

The following chapter presents a discussion of the influence of the Pentecostal-charismatic movement on contemporary video films. Specifically, it examines the construction of masculinities in the film *The Broken Wall* by analyzing the role and place of the born-again Pentecostal-charismatic Christian father at home, church, and work. The discussion is focused on the principal characters, their given circumstances examined through the lens of Christian theology and other teachings about Christian masculinities at home, church, and work. The chapter demonstrates that select independent video filmmakers have proposed a new version of modernity rooted in Pentecostal-charismatic

ideals and teachings, and have thus contributed to the emergence of Pentecostal-charismatic masculinities. Throughout the discussion I will refer to these religious video films as "hallelujah video films" a term coined by Onookome Okome to describe Christian video films in Nollywood ("Writing the Anxious City").

Hallelujah Video Films

The emergence of the video film industry in Ghana has greatly aided the propagation of Pentecostal-charismatic messages; these churches have learned to create a new public culture by employing mass media outlets, including radio, TV, and film. Meyer describes the stories portrayed in hallelujah video films as "the latest rumors about the illicit acquisition of wealth, confessions about the work of Satan and his demons, and—inevitably—testimonies about the miracles brought about by the Holy Spirit and by the Pentecostal pastors, video films are inspired and woven into the texture of everyday life" ("Praise the Lord", 3).

Christian messages are common themes explored in many Ghanaian video films. Ancestral worship and the Christian God are presented in conflict with one another (in fact, the films actually depict face-to-face confrontations between pastors and traditional priests, in which pastors always win the battle). Life is portrayed as a continuous struggle between God and demonic powers

manifested through witchcraft, juju, ancestral spirits, water spirits, and local gods. In these video films, church members are warned against having anything to do with such demonic powers, and so are discouraged from visiting local shrines and taking part in family rituals or festivals, particularly those that involve the pouring of libation, as such occasions are regarded as synonymous with demonic worship, the "doorways" through which the devil might enter to disrupt one's individual and family life. Okome notes that "traditional belief systems are often pitted against Christian doctrine, with the narrative order emphasizing the Manichean duality between good and evil. The Christian God represents all that is light and good, whereas traditional beliefs are portrayed as darkness" ("The Popular Art"). Meyer explains that these films enthusiastically "[echo] the views and concerns of Pentecostal Charismatic churches, which became increasingly popular in the course of 1980s, the video film industry…[contributing] significantly to the emergence of a Pentecostally infused—or better: Pentecostalite—public culture" (*Popular Ghanaian Cinema* 2). For instance, although producer William Akuffo would like to make films in other genres, he fears that Pentecostal-charismatic culture has taken over the industry, thereby forcing him to comply with audience expectation. He explained to BBC News that religious themes are explored in the films simply because that is what audiences demand. Hammond Mensah, of HM Films, is an active Moslem, yet he produces video films with Christian themes because they

are in line with public demand. Mensah is able to reconcile this apparent conflict of interests through a recognition that Pentecostalism and Islam teach many of the same values (Meyer "Praise the Lord"). Unlike Nigeria, where Pentecostal-charismatic church groups produce Christian films, in Ghana the churches are not yet directly involved in film production. Much as in Nigeria, however, filmmakers may not necessarily be Christian but produce the films because religiously-themed video films sell so well. Franklin Kennedy, a researcher studying the Ghanaian film industry, is quoted by BBC News as saying that the films' "popular appeal owes much to audiences' need to identify with characters" ("Ghanaian Films Grow"). The films appeal to young people because these individuals can see themselves reflected on the screen. Some of the scenes in the films are taken live at these churches making such video films more popular with church members. As Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity is the order of the day, Christian-minded people seek to identify with the characters in these films. Okome explains the position that filmmakers are in:

> These filmmakers and video makers have been able to negotiate their vocational calling in an economy that is at best patronizing, while at the same time providing a space for the discussion of the city. Film and video producers know this social fact. They know what their urban audiences prefer. They go all out to make these popular preferences possible and available in their films. They know too that this is the only way to assure success at the box-office, which makes further productions possible. ("Video Film in Nigeria" 52)

To ensure box-office success, traditional religion must be condemned and charismatic Christianity exalted. Attempts to portray Christian values negatively often result in financial disaster.

Both the films and the sermons presented in charismatic churches encourage Christians to trust in God to supply all their needs and avoid the temptation of indulging in the occult to gain wealth. The films suggest that certain aspects of modernity, urbanization for example, present challenges that ought to be dealt with carefully - especially the temptation to acquire wealth through foul means. The sermons and video films make it clear that faith in God through his son Jesus Christ and total dependence on the Holy Spirit are the only means to prevent one from falling into evil. God is put forth as the only source of intervention, indeed as an immediate solution to common problems that cannot be handled by mere mortals, political leaders for instance. Church-goers are assured that once they turn their hearts from evil, their prayers will be answered. Meyer explains that Pentecostal-charismatic Christians "take as a point of departure the opposition of God and the devil, who is considered as the Lord of the local gods and spirits and represents salvation as a turn away from African religious traditions and social relationships entailed in them" (*Popular Ghanaian Cinema* 13). Examples of Ghanaian hallelujah video films include *The Broken Wall, Expectations 1 & 2, Shadows of the Past, Idols of Heart, Babina 1-3, Breaking with the Past 1 & 2, Stolen Bible 1 & 2* and *Time*.

The Broken Wall

The Broken Wall written and produced by Christyn Agwu Michaels and directed by Sammy O. Agwu explores the story of Mr. and Mrs. Olu, a happily married Christian couple, whose marriage is threatened by the husband's adultery with another parishioner. Mr. Olu is the successful owner of a publishing house, and Mrs. Olu is a real estate developer. The Olu family belongs to one of the Charismatic churches in Accra (no reference is made to the name of the church but it is obvious that the church scenes are shot at the Solid Rock Church in Accra). Mr. Olu is a deacon and Mrs. Olu plays an active role in the women's ministries; both also serve as counsellors in marital affairs. They have four teenage children: two boys and two girls. The family operates according to principles of the Bible; they regularly organize family devotions, and attend church services both during the week and on Sundays. For Mr. and Mrs. Olu, biblical teachings (e.g., "train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6)) provide direction in their parental activities. By Ghanaian cultural standards, the family is quite successful; they have a car and a large house with many modern domestic amenities.

Ama teaches Sunday school at the same church attended by the Olu family. She is thirty years old, and worried that she has not yet been asked for her hand in marriage, a source of great anxiety for her, and the cause of some

depression. She decides to seek spiritual counselling from Mr. Olu, and during one of their counselling sessions, the two become romantically involved. Over time, sex becomes part of these sessions, and Ama eventually becomes pregnant. The church takes disciplinary action against Mr. Olu; Mrs. Olu files for divorce; a once exemplary Christian family disintegrates. The couple separates pending a court ruling on their divorce case, and the children, who are shuffled between the parents, understandably become unruly and difficult to control. Meanwhile, Mr. Olu fights to restore his marriage, his family, and his relationship with God. Mrs. Olu is at first unforgiving, but through the intervention of the Holy Spirit, she is able to forgive her husband, and the Olu family is reunited. Through her faith she is even able to accept Ama as part of the family. *The Broken Wall* is significantly different from other hallelujah films as certain thematic issues such as physical manifestations of the devil, juju, and occultism are absent. The focus is on Christian family values and the need for forgiveness in marriage.

Spiritual Masculinity at Home

The Broken Wall features Mr. Olu in three distinct spaces where he performs masculinity: the home, church, and work. This section of the chapter will discuss Pentecostal-charismatic conceptions of Mr. Olu's role and responsibilities in the home and the church. Although the domestic and the

church spaces are physically separate, the role these spaces play in individuals' lives is often intertwined. In a sense, the home is the performance space for all that has been learned at the church, so a man's spirituality is crucial to masculinity at home. The film opens with an aerial shot of some very large, quite magnificent buildings in Accra. As the opening credits roll, there is a montage of buildings including the National Theatre, the Ghana Commercial Bank head office, the Accra International Conference Centre, and Independence Square. The camera finally cuts to Mr. Olu's home. It is 6:30 in the morning and the man is still in bed despite having a meeting to attend at 7am. Mrs. Olu is already up and busy preparing breakfast. She wakes her husband and reminds him of his impending meeting. A few scenes later, Mr. Olu is dressed for a church meeting holding a large Bible and on his way out he resolves a dispute between his children. The opening of the film clearly establishes Mr. Olu's position as the head of the family– he is served, and he has authority over the other family members. In fact, these initial scenes establish the three distinct roles of the man at home: head of the family, breadwinner, and spiritual leader. These roles are interconnected, and performed concurrently. Mr. Olu's fatherhood practices are derived from his religious beliefs. Browning is right to assert that there is a connection between fatherhood and religion: "But fatherhood, religion, and the churches are connected in even deeper ways. [...] Fatherhood has been a central concern of both Judaism and Christianity. In fact,

it is not an exaggeration to say that these religions helped bring about something of a revolution in our understanding of fatherhood" (195).

The Broken Wall gives a prominent place to the father in the home and attempts to present an image of the ideal father - deeply connected physically, emotionally and spiritually with his family. As the head of the house, Mr. Olu is responsible for providing for the needs of his family. Although both parents have successful careers, taking care of the children's material needs is portrayed as the man's responsibility. At no point in the film is Mrs. Olu asked for money by her children or husband, nor is she ever shown to be financially responsible for anything else in the house. Also, as the family does not seem to undergo any type of financial hardship at any point in the film, the implication is that Mr. Olu is an effective provider. Although Mr. Olu is involved in his children's life in a variety of dimensions, the greatest emphasis is placed on his role as their financial caretaker. Apart from a single scene in which he is shown playing with his youngest daughter in the backyard, all dealings with his children focus on his position as the breadwinner (or disciplinarian). For instance, Mr. Olu returns home from work one evening and is approached by his daughter Amanda, who reminds him of his promise to take the family out for the weekend. The girl further presents a list of items that she wants her father to buy for her. In this frame, the girl climbs freely onto her father's bed, touching him while she requests her items. More generally, the film depicts the intimacy

that the children enjoy with their father. Another scene shows Elsie in her father's office, asking him to buy her textbooks for school. In both scenes, the children approach their father with ease and he is always ready to attend to their needs. The children are clearly connected to their father, at some level, on the basis of his being their provider.

The film thus emphasizes traditional masculinity, with religious implications, in the father's breadwinning role. His duty is therefore not only a financial mandate, but a spiritual one. The children know— that it is his responsibility to clothe and feed them - and they do not hesitate to approach him for assistance. Researchers generally agree that conceptions of traditional masculinity are closely linked with breadwinning. Cohen, among others, notes that being a provider is what establishes a man's position as a traditional father:

> If the traditional depiction of men in families were accurate and complete, then fathers' roles in their children's lives would center around providing rather than around any other dimension of parenting. It would also follow that breadwinning activities would be what made them most feel like fathers because that would represent the fulfillment of their primary obligation. (11)

Though Mr. Olu has multiple responsibilities in the home, the video film proposes that breadwinning is a father's primary responsibility, the basis upon which he is to connect emotionally with his family, and the authority through which he is able to act as the head of the household. Mr. Olu is respected within his family because his children are aware that he holds the key to their physical

needs and emotional comfort. As a child of God, Mr. Olu performs his breadwinning role with joy, and uses his position responsibly. Love for one's family is the prime source of motivation where service toward one's family is concerned. Wilcox beautifully describes what is expected of a Christian father:

> Specifically, fathers are supposed to model the love that God has for humankind to their wives and children. On the one hand, this means taking an active and expressive role in family life. Fathers are encouraged to be involved in the lives of their children and to praise them. But on the other hand, since God's love also includes the just correction of sin, fathers are supposed to be strong disciplinarians. (222)

The ability to provide for his family does not completely establish a man's position as the dominant masculine figure in the home. He must also be able to give his family unconditional love, provide spiritual guidance, and take appropriate disciplinary action whenever the need arises.

Mr. Olu's sense of masculinity is sustained by his ability to provide financially for his family, and hence the film focuses on his work as an important aspect of his life. Due to the high rate of unemployment in the country and the low wages paid to government workers, many people struggle to support their families. In other contemporary films where the man is not a Christian, he is often shown to use a lack of financial success as an excuse to avoid responsibility, placing a greater burden on the woman. For example, in *Nightmare I*, there is continuous tension between Frank Osei and his wife Grace, because of Frank's inability to provide properly for the family. The situation

worsens when he becomes unemployed, rendering him immobile and otherwise vulnerable. Such men are presented as failed masculine figures in the video films, often considering themselves "less than a man." McCloughry suggests that a man's security becomes fragile if it depends on economic well-being, since "unemployment brings crises to men because it destroys part of their sense of personal identity and self-worth" (220). While this is true, full unemployment may only be slightly worse than an inability to care financially for one's family at a desired level. To address this, the Christian men featured in most hallelujah video films are depicted as being engaged in private businesses, as private enterprise can be significantly more profitable than a career in the public sector. *The Broken Wall*, for example, presents Mr. Olu as the proud and successful owner of a publishing house. The man's financial position is in accordance with the prosperity gospel preached in modern Pentecostal-charismatic churches. Hallelujah video films suggest that there is no place in society for idle men. Men are expected to earn more than enough money to provide sufficiently for their families. Mr. Olu's financial status is much higher than that of the average Ghanaian. As a born-again Christian, he would be considered a failed masculine figure if he were unable to meet the financial demands of his family.

Many modern day preachers, such as Rev. Dr. Mensah Otabil of the International Central Gospel Church, urge their parishioners to depend on the

blessings of Abraham in order to succeed. Otabil claims that it is impossible for anyone who lives under the blessing of Abraham to be poor. Gifford comments that "Otabil builds on the standard biblical texts of the prosperity gospel: Gen. 22, 13-14; 26, 12-24; Deut. 28, 15-22; Gal. 3, 13-14" (246 "Ghana's Charismatic Churches"). Archbishop Dr. Nicholas Duncan Williams' Christian Action Faith Ministries is established on a theology of success and divine health. Quoting from the Archbishop's book *You are Destined to Succeed*, Gifford writes: "From Gen 1, 29-30 we 'find out that God never planned for (us) or any mankind to have sickness, fear, inferiority, defeat of failure'. In this way he interprets the Bible: 'The word of God is a tree of life that will produce riches, honour, promotion and joy'" ("Ghana's Charismatic Churches" 243). The evidence of such an interpretation is conspicuously visible in the first shot of Mr. Olu's home. A long shot shows the front view of his house, lingering on various aspects of the home to emphasize the family's wealth. Elegant roofing tiles are displayed, as is a solid gate - not only a security device, but an artefact to confirm to viewers that Mr. Olu is indeed living to the full potential of his Christian abilities. The home's beauty is laid out as a veritable statement about the beautiful Christian people who must live within it. Hallelujah videos equate assertions of one's masculine status with the acquisition of material wealth. Though the churches emphasize spiritual growth, material prosperity is somehow a must for every child of God. Commenting on the economic

challenges facing Ghana in an age of modernization and globalization, Gifford notes that the new churches serve as motivators to the masses:

> All these new churches act in some measure as motivators—some to such a degree that they are commonly defined by this function alone. In all of them the stress is to get on, to succeed, to be important, to possess things, to take control. Moreover, these things are your right and inheritance, which you should expect and can demand. The emphasis is on self-esteem, ambition, confidence. (*Ghana's New Christianity* 140)

The spiritual teachings of these video films can be confusing, and indeed quite contradictory. While believers are cautioned against laying up treasures on earth, the absence of material wealth in a believer's life somehow signifies abnormality or failure. The prosperity gospel preached in the churches maintains that health and wealth are the believer's due and that illness and poverty are caused by sin and demonic influence. Mr. Olu's masculinity in the home is bound to his ability to take care of his family; this image is patterned after modern capitalist ideals of men striving to establish their manhood through financial independence. Though the fundamental teachings of the church encourage men to reject the secular world, masculinity as portrayed in hallelujah video films uses secular ideals to make the man. The prosperity gospel and similar themes found in these films are akin to the images presented by advertising companies to encourage boundless spending, material acquisition and consumption. As Sam Keen contends:

> Nowadays, supplying the necessities entitles a man only to marginal

> respect. If your work allows you to only survive you are judged to be not much of a man. To be poor in a consumer society is to have failed the manhood test, or at least to have gotten a D-. The advertising industry reminds us at every turn that real men, successful men, powerful men, are big spenders. (53)

The ability to live in affluence is an indication of the truly masculine protagonist in hallelujah video films. Mr. and Mrs. Olu's life is free from petty quarrels because they have enough money to conduct their lives above such issues. The prosperity they enjoy is the physical representation of their inner security and the fact that their faith is in God.

Mediating the Question of Submission

It is required of a man of God to live a balanced life; apart from possessing material wealth he must also possess a rich faith in God, and be in a position to affect others with his wisdom of God. The opportunity for Mr. Olu to demonstrate this wisdom comes in the form of his interactions with the Kwame family.

Mr. and Mrs. Kwame attend the same church as the Olus. The Kwames' first appearance in *The Broken Wall* is during a church service, to which Mrs. Kwame arrives with her arm bandaged, walking in front of Mr. Kwame. The cause of her injury is not immediately clear, but later events reveal that she is a victim of domestic violence. The camera follows the couple as they move to find available seating, Mrs. Kwame spots an empty chair and moves toward it, but

Mr. Kwame touches her from behind to prevent that choice. She responds by shoving him violently, taking the seat, and leaving him to find seating elsewhere. This scene is brief, but it immediately establishes the antagonism between the couple and confirms the distress in their marriage. The nature of their conflict is later exposed when Mrs. Kwame runs to the Olu family for help. This scene opens with Mr. and Mrs. Olu reading the Bible aloud in turns, first the husband, and then the wife. The Olus' Bible study is interrupted by the hurried entrance of Mrs. Kwame, followed closely by Mr. Kwame, a cane in one hand and a Bible in the other. (The scene is in fact a juxtaposition of the families to highlight the difference between the two patriarchs' understandings of masculinity.) The arm of Mrs. Kwame's dress is torn, suggesting that she has been assaulted again by her husband. Despite her refuge in the Olu home, Mr. Kwame continues to pursue her and attempts to strike her several more times. Mr. Kwame cites the reason for his violence as his wife's refusal to be submissive. He repeatedly quotes Ephesians 5: 23, 24, which states: "wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife. . ." Mr. Kwame rationalizes his violent behaviour as an act of spirituality, as he feels that his wife is disobeying the scriptures. The true source of his anger, of course, is not Mrs. Kwame's refusal to submit, but something else – in this case, financial difficulty. The couple had previously decided, in line with church teaching to maintain a joint bank account.

According to Mrs. Kwame, her husband withdraws money from this account without her knowledge, and is violent toward her when she demands to know how the money has been spent. Clearly, financial matters can become a contentious issue even in Christian marriages. T.D. Jakes explains that while marriage is a contract patterned after the relationship between Christ and the Church, and should be approached as such, financial matters have the potential to introduce significant disruption into this relationship:

> For marriage is a covenant, ordained by God to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church, including the resources shared between them. Handling money has the potential to unite a couple in closer harmony as they share their labor and enjoy a larger harvest than what one could accomplish alone. However, the love of money also has great power to undermine their intimacy as it draws them into separate pursuits and individual expenditures. (223)

Mr. Kwame takes his wife's demands for accountability as effrontery. He interprets her questioning as insubordination, and since he refuses to follow the family budget, the two are always at war with each other. Mrs. Kwame loses respect for her husband because he does not manage the family's finances well. As Jakes notes, when couples put their resources together, they can happily enjoy the fruits of their labour together (witness the life of Mr. and Mrs. Olu). Mrs. Kwame refers to her husband as "bad rubbish and a good for nothing man" because of his poor track record in all things financial. Mr. Kwame expects that with a single Bible verse he will be able to justify his actions, but in

doing so he forgets that as a born-again Christian he must treat his wife as co-head of the home. In the Pentecostal-charismatic Christian view, spirituality and financial management are strongly related, as a man who cannot maintain harmony in his home, including financial harmony, has failed the test of manhood. The case of the Kwames, then, exposes the inner conflict and instability that can result from financial mismanagement. The film projects Mr. Kwame as a failure, unable to apply the teachings of the Bible to matters of money in his home.

As Mrs. Kwame narrates her ordeal, her husband still attempts to hit her. To avoid this, Mrs. Olu takes her to another room, leaving the men together. With a crosscutting technique, the film simultaneously presents the men's and women's parallel discussions. Both discussions focus on the issue of power and authority in these Christian homes. Mrs. Kwame wonders whether her husband really understands what it means to be the head of a family, and confides in Mrs. Olu that Mr. Kwame treats her as a slave. Mrs. Olu assures her that dealing with such a man will require wisdom from above. Moreover, it is their calling as women to obey their husbands, as this is considered indirect service to God. While Mrs. Olu believes in gender equality, she senses that it is often advantageous to allow men to have their way, in the interest of peace in the home. This is her view, of course, but it does not serve to empower Mrs. Kwame. Meanwhile, Mr. Kwame complicates the situation with a misguided

interpretation of Ephesians 5:22-23, which sets out the man as head of the household. McCloughry suggests that many men misread this verse, "[believing] that this teaching gives them 'an edge' over women. [These] men seem to divorce the idea of being a husband from the call to be Christ-like and can be coercive, imposing their view of the world on others" (61). By encouraging Mrs. Kwame to continue to endure the violence in her marriage, Mrs. Olu actually contradicts the new position of women in the church.

The scene dissolves into the conversation between the men. Mr. Olu urges Mr. Kwame to use his position as head of the household wisely, to bring peace and harmony into his home. Mr. Kwame is clearly struggling between two identities of masculine authority – one as a traditional Ghanaian husband, the other as a charismatic born-again Christian husband. C.K. Brown, in discussing the household economic responsibilities in Ghanaian families, notes that in "the traditional Ghanaian society the man has always been looked up to as the head of the household and the breadwinner of the family. He [is] given control over the necessary economic and other resources like land, labour, and money" (27). Based on this traditional ideology, Mr. Kwame firmly believes that as head of the household he does not need to consult his wife before using the money that he earns. Further, he does not see anything wrong with using the money his wife earns, as he believes that, as her husband, everything she owns becomes his.

Mr. Kwame essentially fails to realize that by committing to follow the principles of the Bible, he has forfeited his traditional hegemonic masculine status as the sole head of the household. He does not understand that, although the church still recognizes the man as the head of the family, women must be empowered to "assume more responsibility for the affairs of the household" (Brown 27). Mr. Kwame seems to embrace only those Christian ideas that oppress women and relegate them to the background. Joanne C. Brown cautions that "until the church reconsiders the extent to which Christian theology, biblical interpretation and church structures are linked to male aggression and violence it will be a hindrance, not a help" (9). In fact, the church abhors violence, and is making an attempt to establish a more respectable position for women. Indeed, the church featured in the film is shown to have done away with archaic interpretations of Christianity - the head pastor of the church is a woman, and women are featured prominently in this video film. Also, the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Olu and their children demonstrates the new theology being preached in Pentecostal-charismatic churches. The new doctrines are unfortunately difficult to accept by men like Mr. Kwame, as they are seen to draw power away from men. Mr. Olu admonishes Mr. Kwame, explaining that although the Bible commands women to be submissive, it does not mean for them to be slaves. Tim Lahaye clarifies that the Bible "does not suggest that a woman is inferior or insignificant. A wise

husband will recognize that his wife is the most significant human being in his life. She is his partner, companion, lover, and friend. When so regarded, she finds it easy to 'submit to her husband as unto the Lord' in everything" (230). Mr. Kwame does not regard his wife as his companion and lover, as this, in his mind, would denote weakness. Mrs. Kwame is quick to suggest that her husband should look for a female slave since she is tired of enduring his punches. The actions of men such as Mr. Kwame serve only to worsen the situation of women already caught up in a society which privileges men over women.

In a scene where Mr. Olu tells Mr. Kwame that Mrs. Kwame has equal rights in their marriage, Mr. Kwame reacts visually in a way that establishes the turmoil within him, and confirms that this is difficult for him to deal with. His body language indicates a dejection, a sense of being stripped of what identifies him as a man -when "men define themselves by power they are at once driven by the impossible desire to become replicas of omnipotent gods and are haunted by their repressed semipotence" (Keen 103). At risk of having to consider himself weak, fragile, semipotent, Mr. Kwame rejects the theology of equal rights that Mr. Olu preaches. In pursuing stereotypical concepts of authoritarian traditional masculinity, he will inevitably fall short. Men that insist on having power over women, whether or not they cite biblical verses to support this, are doing so "at the expense of wearing a mask which hides their

vulnerability. Until a man is willing to lay down power, with its connotations of superiority, he cannot be whole" (McCloughry 74). Mr. Olu explains that marriage is to be characterized by mutual submission, as it is only through this that peace can prevail in the home. Mr. Kwame, who is accustomed to exercising a traditional form of masculine authority, must learn to embrace the new approach set out in Pentecostal-charismatic doctrine.

The major problem plaguing the Kwame family is in how each party defines 'submission' - the husband leaning on Ghanaian traditional practices and the woman on the newer Pentecostal-charismatic doctrine. Clearly, the traditional definition of submission favours men, while the Pentecostal-charismatic Christian view supports women. Conventional Christian doctrine might fall somewhere in the middle. As Joanne Brown elaborates:

> Christianity has overwhelmingly accepted and affirmed male control, and has been equivocal, to say the least, in challenging prevailing assumptions about masculinity. Historically, women have been marginalized and devalued by the language, the teaching and organization of the church. They have been objects of contempt, veneration, patronization and exploitation. (9)

In line with this account, while Mrs. Kwame attempts to achieve equality in her marriage, Mr. Kwame twists the interpretation of the scripture to pursue his domineering masculine agenda. Lahaye, addressing married Christian men, reminds them that love is the key to success in married life: "Men, your love and leadership remain the keys to your home life. God has given you the power

to lead your families in the ways of God, surrounding them with the love they seek from you, and he commands you to fulfill your responsibilities" (231). Mr. Kwame does not trust this explanation, believing that love is not enough to maintain his authority. What he fails to understand is that, within the new system, effective leadership in an atmosphere of love will become the determining factor of his masculinity. He fears for the stability of his honour as a man - as honour plays a vital role in the construction of masculinity, the emergence of Pentecostal-charismatic doctrine has shaken the position of men as the sole possessors of honour. With the call from Mr. Olu that love in the atmosphere of peace is the major requirement for a successful marriage Mr. Kwame's authority base is shaken because: "Honour has been most often a masculine good in the sense that the ability to kill destroy, compel others to subordinate themselves, and control resources either necessary for survival or status has been most often a power held by men" (Harris 197). Mr. Kwame believes that the ability to control the family's finances without any input from his wife makes him the absolute head. Pentecostal-charismatic teachings do not strip men of their honour, but adjust the method through which they are to attain it - by becoming spiritually inclined to the teachings of the Bible. In administering power in conjunction with their wives, men are able to compound their own power. The church's demand for its followers to achieve masculinity in this way is analogous to Jesus' demand that his followers lay

down their lives in order to gain them. Those who actively seek masculinity become emasculated, while those willing to give it up become empowered, and attain respect. This issue is one that the hallelujah video films have not fully addressed. *The Broken Wall,* for example, fails to indicate how to draw the fine line between Ghanaian traditional practices and Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity. Characters such as Mr. Kwame cannot achieve a balanced identity within the two ideals, and are not taught how to accomplish this. Mr. Kwame's ambivalent position is indicative of the superficiality of the issues presented in video films. It also shows that masculinity itself is fragmented, unstable, and internally contradictory

Traditional Images versus Christian Expectations

The situation in *The Broken Wall* is complicated further. This video film borrows numerous images directly from traditional Ghanaian social and cultural life. It is rather ironic that while Pentecostal-charismatic messages insist that born-again Christians must make a complete break with the past if they are to succeed, traditional social and cultural practices are still applauded in hallelujah video films. One example of this occurs in the domestic space, often the centre of attention for many of these films. The protagonist normally owns a large house, usually located in a rich residential area surrounded by a heavy cement wall, with a garden boy to take care of the grounds. The ability to build

such a house is a traditional symbol of attaining manhood. One of the noblest things for a man to achieve among Ghanaians is for him to construct a house. Building a house symbolizes a successful life. Stephan F. Miescher found that among Ghanaian men, "building a house was one of the most important achievements in life" (178). The born-again married man who owns a house – the larger the better – is portrayed as the ideal hegemonic masculine figure. This ideology of material acquisition, as presented in *The Broken Wall*, is a direct influence from Ghanaian traditional interpretations of masculinity, which is reinforced by the prosperity gospel preaching in Pentecostal-charismatic churches. Interestingly, while the film sets many scenes in Mr. Olu's home – in the kitchen, living room, bedroom, and garden – Mr. Kwame's house is never shown, perhaps another indication of his failed masculinity. The implication is that, as he is unable to maintain peace and order in his home, the blessings of Abraham are not bestowed upon him. He is not a "true man" – the film is careful to show him in church and in the Olus' house, but never in his own home – a sign of his incomplete life.

The video film also indirectly promotes traditional gender roles, in showing a society where women stay at home and take care of domestic chores while men go out into the world to earn money. While Mrs. Olu is presented as having a successful career, and Mrs. Kwame briefly mentions that she works, Mrs. Olu is most often featured in the domestic space. The opening scene of the

film establishes her more as a housewife than a realtor. Indeed, in her conversations with friends and family, Mrs. Olu most often discusses her obligations as a wife and mother. One evening, while in the kitchen preparing the family meal, her eldest son David comments that washing dishes is a girl's duty, and he does not understand why he is in the kitchen doing this chore while his sister Amanda is watching television. His mother reminds him that there is no gender rule where domestic chores are concerned. She explains that in a Christian home gender is collapsed, and there are no traditionally assigned duties for the sexes. Mrs. Olu concludes that "what we have in this house are children." The boy is confused because he does not see his father performing any house chores. Although Mr. Olu contributes more than the average man at home, domestic work still does not form part of the ideal image of a modern Pentecostal-charismatic Christian masculine figure. Projections of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian masculinity, while admirable in many respects, still position the man as the most privileged figure in the family. Though this video film makes some attempt to reconstruct masculinity in the home, Mr. Olu's character still conforms to that of a traditional husband and father who is served by his wife and children. His identity "revolves around notions of the breadwinner, the assumption of mature adult responsibilities in terms of wife and children, the settling-down into respectability, duty and security" (Morgan 226).

A significant feature of hallelujah video films is that they promote the nuclear family system, truly a remnant of colonialism. Christian marriage was introduced by the missionaries, and the colonial masters later instituted the Marriage Ordinance of 1884. The purpose of this ordinance was to promote monogamous marriages and for settling of intestate estates (Daniels 94). Christian marriage involves having the union of one man and one woman blessed in a church by a priest or pastor. The Marriage Ordinance requires that the marriage be registered at the Registrar General's Department or the Office of a City Council. Both institutions provide security for the woman and children in issues of inheritance. The registration also guarantees the woman's position as the only wife, as marriage under the church and the Ordinance must be monogamous. Nukunya laments that the "features of the new types of marriage have therefore come to emphasize nuclear family relations at the expense of extended family ties" (163). This devaluation of the extended family system often allows for more conflict between those in the nuclear family and extended family members. In *The Broken Wall*, only one short scene shows Mrs. Olu in discussion with her mother. These frames show Mrs. Olu standing at an angle to her mother that suggests that she is eager to end the interaction. The location of this scene is unclear as it is in the middle of nowhere; a further indication of how the church regards the extended family system. In fact, in this instance Mrs. Olu refuses her mother's counsel. It seems that the church has

taken the place of extended family for Mrs. Olu; there she, along with other women, is able to forge new social networks, and is able to seek and offer counsel with a variety of others. The church facilitates the women's efforts to construct new social realities for themselves. With the absence of extended family members, couples are better able to concentrate on fulfilling the needs of one another, and those of their children. Hallelujah video films portray the nuclear family as the ideal family setting. This system may be particularly attractive to women "who want their husbands to concentrate on them and their children, rather than spend money to meet obligations towards the wider family or for fun (especially with young girl friends). The films are in favour of the wife and her dream" (Meyer, *Popular Ghanaian Cinema* 20).

Spiritual Masculinity at Work

Another major dimension of the performance of masculinity in *The Broken Wall* occurs in the work place. Mr. Olu owns a publishing house, where he has others working under him. The first workplace scene opens with a dispute between his employees Jojo and Oppeah. Jojo believes Oppeah's work to be below the newspaper's standards, and refuses to publish his articles. However, the conversation that ensues between the two men indicates that Jojo may simply be interested in demonstrating his superiority over Oppeah. Jojo is next in command to Mr. Olu, so in the latter's absence, Jojo tends to reveal certain

hyper-masculine tendencies, perhaps for power, perhaps only for attention. Undoubtedly, "men's attitude to work and employment is one of the defining characteristics of contemporary masculinity. The concepts of independence and autonomy which are at the heart of 'being a man' are associated with the world of work" (McCloughry 219). Jojo's insistence on flaunting his limited authority in Mr. Olu's absence may, in itself, be an indication of his own insecurity in being subordinate to Mr. Olu. Jojo intimidates Oppeah by threatening that he may lose his column if his writing does not improve; he does this publicly to humiliate Oppeah, and uses professional language to exhibit his competence. As Jennifer Pierce illustrates, intimidation in middle-class professions no longer depends on "physical ability but on mental quickness and a highly developed set of social skills. Thus, masculinising practices, such as aggression and humiliation, take on an emotional and intellectual tone specific to middle-class occupations and professions" (9). Oppeah would like to dispute Jojo's assertions, but this prospect is made daunting by Jojo's reference to readers' reception and professionalism in their argument. So, while Oppeah's points may be equally valid, he does not have access to the same level of technical language as Jojo, and is unable to sustain his argument.

The power dynamics change when Mr. Olu appears on the scene. Jojo recognizes Mr. Olu's authority, but remains strong on his opposition to Oppeah. Jojo is further agitated by Mr. Olu's decision not to publish a story

about a certain lawyer's wife, but fails in his arguments with Mr. Olu, much as Oppeah failed with him. The calm with which Mr. Olu addresses the issue is admirable, as Jojo's response more closely resembles an attack than a dialogue. Maturity is the key to Mr. Olu comportment, coupled with a Pentecostal-charismatic dedication to making a positive difference in the world. The ability to do this is a central component of masculinity, as Don E. Eberly describes:

> If the picture of dysfunctional masculinity is ugly, the picture of a mature masculinity is beautiful. There are few things more magnificent than a mature man, rich in character and self-control, secure in his masculinity, confident in his fathering, and able to lead and serve with compassion and tender-heartedness. Such a man makes a huge difference in his world. (24)

Jojo's agitation in the office may therefore be taken as a sign of dysfunctional masculinity; at one point he actually confesses to being jealous of the power that Mr. Olu enjoys. The workplace scene contrasts Mr. Olu's maturity with Jojo's immaturity. This is done to emphasize the success that one can achieve by seeking maturity, and thereby masculinity, through Christian principles. In the conversation between Mr. Olu and Jojo, Mr. Olu is hesitant to publish the story due to a credibility issue, but Jojo fears that another publishing house would pick it up, and insists that they should run it quickly to boost their image. Mr. Olu calmly explains that their principles must take precedence over their popularity. This exchange serves to show the difference between the course that each man has chosen toward masculinity. Jojo seeks to pursue it via power and

popularity, while Mr. Olu has already achieved it in his success as a fair and compassionate leader. The discussion concludes with Mr. Olu strongly suggesting that Jojo confirm his source's credibility before running the story.

Once this is dealt with, Mr. Olu moves on to resolve the conflict between Jojo and Oppeah. He requests all of the articles that Oppeah has written in the past three months, and arranges to meet both of them later. The conflict resolution takes place in Mr. Olu's office. The scene is clearly set to strategically enhance Mr. Olu's power and exhibit his superior problem-solving skills. The theme is consistent; this scene is not unlike those where Mr. Olu resolves his children's dispute or mediates between Mr. and Mrs. Kwame. All of these settings emphasize problem-solving as a component of Christian masculinity – Mr. Olu is expected to depend upon the teachings of the Bible and faith in the Holy Spirit to make effective judgments. Though he never quotes the Bible directly in these mediations, his attitude, composure, and speech are informed by biblical principles. In the end, of course, he succeeds in creating peace between his workers; they shake hands warmly before leaving his office.

The Broken Wall attempts to illustrate the necessary balance of home, church and work. Mr. Olu is a busy man, but somehow he is able to maintain this balance such that his family is never adversely affected. Despite his heavy schedule, he spends quality time with his family, attends church services regularly, and is always present at work. Mr. Olu might therefore be said to

maintain the appropriate masculinities in all three realms. He is empowered to perform effectively in these three spheres because of a belief in a power greater than himself. As Eberly notes, men become misdirected when their masculinity lacks positive form and substance. He calls upon men to repair their broken masculinities because "the journey toward true masculinity requires that we ignore the various models of manhood that are frequently offered. We must journey farther upstream to the true headwaters of masculinity, says author Stu Weber, 'to the true taproot of masculine health,' to the God who designed men" (30). *The Broken Wall* does not suggest that hallelujah masculinities are easy to attain; it does show the challenges of men as they negotiate their places at home, church and work. It encourages men to depend on God, as men often need supernatural assistance to meet the demands of society.

Spiritual Masculinity on Trial

The most crucial determinant of a man's masculinity in hallelujah video films is his ability to demonstrate maturity in all facets of his life. This type of masculinity is constructed in the church, but it is expected to be applied in other areas of life. At home, a man is expected to be the priest who presides over spiritual matters. He is expected to nurture the whole family in the ways of the Lord, and to be a man of spiritual warfare, waging war against the forces of darkness through prayer,, protecting his family from attack. The church

promotes the stability of the household and discourages men from engaging in traditional male activities such as drinking, gambling, and adultery. The demands and expectations in Mr. Olu's life are high – he is judged not only as a man, but as a born-again Christian. Wealth and political connections alone cannot define masculinity. Rosalind Hackett discusses this dilemma appropriately when she argues that Pentecostal-charismatic churches "have reinvented the categories of power and status, which cease to be primarily tied to material wealth and political connection, but rather to spiritual authority and revelation" (262). Producers of private independent papers and films, whose financial profit depends on audience reception, echo Pentecostal-Charismatic views in their works and by so doing have contributed immensely to the establishment of Pentecostal–charismatic public culture (Meyer, "Praise the Lord"). *The Broken Wall* is careful to show that Mr. Olu's financial success alone cannot elevate him to the status of a dominant masculine figure; he must also demonstrate spiritual maturity. He does this by becoming a deacon in the church and a recognized counsellor. During church services, he sits at the front with the head pastor. However, his spiritual masculinity is put to the test when Ama approaches him for counselling.

The film consciously demarcates private and public spaces, but there are instances where both intertwine and collapse into the church space. Though the home and the church are seen as complementary, events involving Mr. Olu and

Ama show that these spaces are diametrically opposed; church responsibilities, including counselling, should perhaps only be conducted in the church. Ama begins to meet with Mr. Olu in his office for counselling, and the two quickly become intimate. The meeting itself is not a forbidden one – Mr. Olu is acting as deacon and counsellor, and furthermore, Mrs. Olu is aware of the meeting. Nevertheless, their intimacy eventually results in Ama's pregnancy.

It may be useful to digress for a moment to comment that extra-marital affairs have been presented as a major threat to numerous marriages in contemporary video films. The issue is presented prominently in videos such as *A Call at Midnight*, in which Kwamena Simon maintains both a wife and a girlfriend, an expensive undertaking that he finances with the embezzlement of company funds. Simon is arrested, charged, convicted, and imprisoned. His wife becomes a single parent, left to raise their two daughters. In *A Stab in the Dark*, Mr. Ansah's personal secretary becomes his lover. When Mrs. Ansah learns of the affair, the family disintegrates – Mrs. Ansah leaves, and their eldest daughter Kate moves in with a pastor, while Mr. Ansah's girlfriend moves into his house. D.S. Boateng cites Family and Development Program research completed in 1994 that shows that "50 percent of single female parents were divorced, 30 percent were deserted, 14 percent were victims of transfers while only 2 percent were widowed" (2). The report also indicates that more households are being headed by women, which puts extra pressure on women

to provide financially and emotionally for their children. In contemporary video films, over 80 percent of broken marriages are due to unfaithfulness on the part of men. More often than not, the discovery of extramarital affairs in these films results in either the temporary or permanent separation of the spouses.

The presentation of the extra-marital affair between Ama and Mr. Olu in *The Broken Wall* differs greatly from that shown in most non-Christian films. Mr. Olu's affair with Ama is depicted as an accident rather than a lifestyle. It is also dealt with quite differently - the church elders who learn of the affair meet with one another to discuss it, and agree to punish Mr. Olu by stripping him of his position as a deacon. His seat at the front of the church is also taken away. These consequences affect all dimensions of Mr. Olu's life. Mr. Olu's adultery is treated as a sin, and part of what defines him as a spiritual man is thereby removed. The scene where the elders meet to discuss Mr. Olu's punishment opens with a prayer meeting. The opening prayer, which indicates spirituality of the group emphasizes the church's expectations regarding issues of adultery: it is sin against God! As soon as the leader announces the incident, Mr. Olu's head drops and he covers his face with his hands. Some of the church board's members (all men, incidentally) speak harshly to him, describing his behaviour as a terrible sin, and telling him that he made a poor judgment by hosting the counselling sessions at his office and Ama's home rather than at church. While

the leader of the board suggests that they pray for Mr. Olu rather than condemn him, other board members appear almost happy that Mr. Olu has committed a sin. This exposes the hypocrisy embedded among members of the church board, and the quiet competition among members. Mr. Olu's success in life is a source of jealousy for many of these men, and his indiscretion becomes their opportunity to vent this. T.D. Jakes suggests that the constant need to measure up has placed many men into a "cocoon, emotionally embalmed and spiritually entombed. Instead of engaging in a friendship as brothers, we see it as a contest between rivals. Secret rivalry corrodes pure friendship and decays the covenant that could be attained" (154). Perhaps due to such rivalry, Mr. Olu is treated with contempt and is not given the opportunity to defend himself. The attitudes of those in the church, his family, and his colleague at work make it clear that there is no place for failures in the Church community. Instead of helping their fallen friend and brother in the Lord, they ostracize him and make him feel worthless.

Mr. Olu, for his part, is humbled and deals with the situation in line with Christian principles. At no point does he attempt to defend his actions; he accepts the consequences gracefully and apologizes to Ama, his family, and his colleague at work. In the midst of the storm, he fights hard to repair his marriage, even as Mrs. Olu files for divorce, begging her for a second chance. Hallelujah video films tend to emphasize the optimism that characterizes

Christian men - though they may falter along the way, it is always possible to succeed with an adherence to Christian values. Lahaye provides a splendid description of the situation that many men like Mr. Olu find themselves in:

> Good men do not break their wedding vows. Some may, in a time of weakness and selfishness, give in to temptation and be unfaithful, but it will be shortlived, and eventually a man's guilt will bring him to the cross of Christ where he can be forgiven—if he is willing to confess his sins as the Bible teaches and then do what our Lord said: 'Go! And sin no more'. (236)

Because the Christian husband is controlled by a power higher than himself, it is expected that even in times of temptation the Holy Spirit will be present, and will intervene. During this crisis, Mr. Olu is careful not to break his marriage vows. Unlike Mr. Ansah in *A Stab in the Dark* and Mr. Kwamena in *A Call at Midnight*, Mr. Olu deals honourably with the consequences of his actions. Where the other men kept their extramarital affairs a secret and send their wives away when the secret is discovered, Mr. Olu is quick to repent and request God's forgiveness, and halts all contact with Ama. Even in his weakest moments, Mr. Olu displays strength, despite his position on the threshold of losing everything that defines his Christian masculinity. Hallelujah video films emphasize that, in times of weakness, men's involvement in spiritual matters is crucial to the construction of their masculinity. There is indeed a difference between strength and so-called fearlessness - Mr. Olu remains strong, but does not play the manly game of pretending to be fearless. Indeed, there are several

instances where he weeps openly and asks forgiveness from God and his wife. For many men, this is difficult; as Lahaye notes:

> A man unfortunately isn't supposed to cry or be afraid, so he must always play the "manly game"—not only to others, but also to himself. Even if he has a friend to lean on, he finds himself reluctant to admit his weakness. Cold, naked fear may be gripping his heart, but he feels compelled to mask his despair and feign composure. (213)

In Ghana, it is taboo for men to shed tears because, "according to Ghanaian custom, it is considered unmanly to do so" (Bame 72). However, Mr. Olu's episodes of open weeping and the sincerity with which he accepts his fault make him a stronger character, someone who is unafraid of his emotions. His surrender to God and desire to correct his wrong make him a rather likable character. Right in the midst of other men at the board meeting, Mr. Olu bursts into tears. Later that night, he confides in his friend Kofi and shows a lot of remorse for his reckless act. Though he commits adultery, he is still an admirable masculine figure because he acknowledges his fault and repents of his sin. This characterizes the type of masculinity that T.D. Jakes describes when he writes, "if we are to freeze the frames of a true man in motion, we must consider one who lived in the fullness of his masculinity, who loved and failed and wandered and returned, who battled and risked and won and lost, who persevered and danced and sang" (11). The film recognizes that masculinity is not about winning all of the time. The ability to fall and rise up

creates a better masculine figure.

The images of Jesus and His cross play vital roles in the construction of masculinities in hallelujah videos. Viewers are constantly reminded that there is a higher power beyond them that they must ascribe to. Sam Keen observes that deliberations "about manhood in Western culture cannot avoid the figure of Jesus" (102). This is true of Ghanaian hallelujah video films - Jesus becomes the yardstick by which men are measured. Keen also notes that, "every generation discovers a different Jesus—the magical savior, the wonder worker, the mystic, the political rebel, the labour organizer, the capitalist, the communist, the ecologist" (102). Ghanaian hallelujah video films put forth the Jesus figure as an ideal man - humble, compassionate, wealthy, and with high levels of morality and spirituality. The films make it clear that attaining this status demands submission to a higher authority, suggesting that men allow themselves to operate in subordinate masculine positions in order to attain hegemonic masculinity.

Manhood in these Christian videos is only defined in relational terms. A man's physical and spiritual positions in public and private are determined by the amount of "Jesus" that dwells in him. The spirit that controls Mr. Olu is what propels him to humble himself and admit that he has offended both God and his wife. His total surrender to God plays a more important role than his relations with other human beings. When his wife threatens to divorce him, he

reminds her that God has forgiven him, and so she is obligated to forgive him as well. Even under the most difficult circumstances, Mr. Olu does not display any sense of arrogance or pride. There are many instances where he lays on the floor– sometimes partly clothed– and weeps uncontrollably. In addition, he kneels down and begs his wife's forgiveness. This is not an easy approach for most men to take; most men will not exhibit such behaviour, especially before women, as masculinity is so often tied to a man's ability to hide his emotional weaknesses. Traditional masculinity, McCloughry states, "is seen as valid if it depends on physical strength and aggression. Such men are not meant to be emotionally sensitive or expressive and are not meant to be vulnerable or weak in any way" (25). On the contrary, Mr. Olu must be both privately and publicly repentant if he is to achieve the ideal Christian masculinity. This is in line with biblical principles – as Jesus humbled himself in death, he is given the name above every other name (Philippians 2: 5-11).

This period of crisis in Mr. Olu's life also signifies the importance of spirituality for the maintenance of harmony in other areas of life. When the adultery is announced, Mr. Olu's life falls apart – his family is divided; his wife leaves him; his eldest daughter becomes disobedient, and his eldest son becomes a drunkard. Mr. Olu suffers humiliation at work; his subordinate disrespects him, and calls him a disappointment. Finally, the church ostracizes him; he is forgotten, a by-word; at one point it is even suggested that he be

castrated. Mr. Olu's example may be taken as a warning to all Christian men to be cautious in their dealings with the opposite sex. More generally, it is clear that spiritual failure can affect all dimensions of one's life.

Conclusion

Hallelujah video films have contributed to the creation of a new masculine public culture in Ghana in which masculinity is being consistently redefined and negotiated. Masculinities among Pentecostal-charismatic Christians depend on a higher power, so the ideal masculine figure needs a certain amount of "Jesus" in him to achieve this category of theological masculinity. Meyer observes that many hallelujah film projects encourage great respect for wives, and thus women have gladly become advertisers for these video films – they encourage their men to buy the films for home use. In *The Broken Wall*, despite Mr. Olu's weakness, he is an inspiring figure. In observing his character, we learn that in order to become a successful masculine figure in the Pentecostal-charismatic arena, "men must adopt Christian disciplines or techniques of self-control" (Meyer, *Popular Ghanaian Cinema* 22). Evidently, Pentecostal-charismatic men must possess a very specific set of important characteristics in order to achieve their masculinities. The first and most important of these is positive religious direction, derived from a solid commitment to church activities and prayer. A man must be spiritually inclined in order to be a role

model at church, home and work. He must be family oriented, flexible enough to spend time with his family, and mature enough to guide them. He must be the leader of his family, and in so being, he must possess the ability to deal with family crises in a positive, effective manner. A good Christian man must be economically sufficient, thus he must have stable employment, a good house, and a reliable means of transport. He must maintain a healthy, realistic attitude toward work and must be able to get along with his colleagues. No matter how demanding his work might be, he must strive for balance between his work and family lives. In the three main areas that a born-again Christian man is expected to demonstrate a healthy and balanced masculinity, his spirituality takes precedence over the other areas of his social, political and cultural life. *The Broken Wall* suggests that a man who is spiritually balanced, and who can apply his spiritual principles in all areas of life, is bound to succeed. Of course, to do so demands that the man relinquish certain forms of traditional masculinity and sometimes be willing to accept positions of subordination, before true hegemonic masculinity may be bestowed upon him. A Pentecostal-charismatic man who is able to achieve balance between church, family, and work will have met the expectations of his born-again Christian wife and the general Christian public. Achievement of the Pentecostal-charismatic masculinities presented in hallelujah video films may at first seem impossible, but the exploration of characters like Mr. Olu suggests that such masculinities may well be worth

pursuing.

CHAPTER 3

PHALLIC MASCULINITIES: MEN'S SEXUALITY AS MASCULINITY

> *How is it that the penis has come to be defined as the very basis of male power and dominance? Surely the penis itself is a pathetic instrument. It is only when it is sexually aroused that it assumes a kind of potency – otherwise it is a flabby and unaesthetic object.* (Brittan 46)

Introduction: The Quest for Sexual Pleasure

In Ghanaian culture, sexual virility is one area in which men are constrained to perform in a specific way in order to be recognized as being "man enough." Male gendered beings are expected to be sexually active and procreate in order to validate their masculinity; otherwise, they are considered less than men. Men defend and redefine themselves through sex. According to Stoltenberg:

> People born with penises must strive to make the idea of male sexual identity personally real by doing certain deeds, actions that are valued and chosen because they produce the desired feeling of belonging to a sex that is male, and not female. Male sexual identity is experienced only in sensation and action, in feeling and doing, in eroticism and ethics. (*Refusing* 28)

Being born male is not enough, because one must perform according to the rules and regulations of a system in order to be granted acceptance into the gender category referred to as masculine. Leonore Tiefer points out that "sexual virility – the ability to fulfill the conjugal duty, the ability to procreate, sexual power, potency – is everywhere a requirement of the male role and thus 'impotence' is everywhere a matter of concern" (141). The quest for men's

sexual virility causes male gendered human beings to become unstable in their thoughts and actions. Both Stoltenberg and Tiefer point out that sexual intercourse forms a major component of men's identity.

The penis plays a dual role in male sexuality: it is both physical and symbolic. The penis is not only the foundation of a man's erotic enjoyment, but also serves as a symbol of male power: "Engorged and erect, it is a sign of male power, assertion, and achievement, a gun to conquer the world" (Plummer 179). Whitehead also shows that "the male genital organ suggests not only a physical actuality and sexual potential, but as phallus, symbolizes (the inevitability of) male power and dominance" (162).

The concept of the phallus is closely associated with the works of Jacques Lacan, the French psychoanalyst whose analysis of the phallus as the "privileged signifier" is popular among feminist and cultural studies scholars. In ancient cultures, the phallus was connected to power, creativeness, fertility, and men. Gayle Rubin states that the "phallus is a set of meanings conferred upon the penis" (190) and Douglas Steward defines the phallus "as the erect form of the penis and the symbolic value attendant on that form" (606). Thus, the phallus is a social construction that has a universal reference to masculinity. The phallus is always erect, which makes it seem to exist separately from the body, thereby denying it the natural cycles of experience of being hard and soft. Susan Bordo agrees with Lacan that "the phallus belongs to the realm of ideas,

not biology; it's a symbol, not a body part." However, Bordo argues that phallic symbols emerged historically from forms that have biological references. The meaning attached to the phallus, no matter how abstract it might seem, has been grounded in the bodily image of the erect penis and its corresponding ideas that humans have appropriated to it. Looking at the phallus from this perspective, Bordo observes that "to proclaim that the phallus has nothing to do with the penis is to suffer from a sort of advanced 'phallus' complex oneself, in which mind stands supreme over body, human over animal, symbol over flesh" (94). The inability to decipher between the phallus and penis causes a lot of anxiety among men because the penis is unable to possess a lasting phallic position.

The fear of being considered female or "not man enough" puts men under constant pressure, thereby causing them to devise measures of proving their manhood. However, according to Stoltenberg, there is no clear distinction between male and female. Connell also maintains that the commonalities between male and female outweigh the differences and, therefore, observing gender as dichotomous is a deception. Defining gender in terms of differences becomes a problem because, in the absence of differences, gender cannot be recognized. Connell proposes that instead of focusing on differences, the emphasis should be placed on relations, as social relations are the arena within which individuals and groups act. Gender relations consist of difference and

dichotomy as well as many other patterns (8-10). Allan G. Johnson also shares his thoughts on the division of gender into male and female when he notes that:

> Using gender to define the core of what makes us human creates huge contradictions by requiring us to define men and women as fundamentally different from each other and yet also as full human beings. On the one hand, this can't be done, because as soon as human traits are made gender specific, each gender is encouraged to alienate itself from a substantial portion of what makes us human. (83)

Insistence on gender differentiation provides a foreground for one gender called "men" to dominate another gender called "women." The categorization of bodies into male and female is not necessarily done depending on "anatomical differences per se, but on a division created within/by phallocentric discourse—a division represented by presence or absence of the phallus" (Potts, "The Essence" 86). The categorization is a social construction that empowers one gender (men) over the other (women).

Stoltenberg, in his book *Refusing to be a Man*, questions on several occasions the notion of men using women as sex objects. He maintains that men live a lie, so they do everything within their means to make the lie seem real, and sex is one means by which the lie is made real. Not only do men rape women, but men are aggressive in the sexual act, as violence and hostility in sex is believed to make a real man: "Real men get cruel in sex. Real men use their penises like weapons in sex. Real men leave bruises" (Stoltenberg, *Refusing* 31). Violence in sex puts the man in the position of a warrior who is in control of a

powerless person or a prisoner of war. Winning the war of sex allows the man to attain his manhood, and losing it is fatal to his masculine status. Not only does violent sex leave physical bruises, but there are emotional damages as well. The sexual behaviour of men in Ghanaian video films aptly demonstrates how sexual activities function as masculine definition of manhood and the male self. Women on the other hand define masculinity in terms of a man's ability to take care of his family and remain faithful to traditional family values.

Ghanaian video film producers have used the sexual behaviours of men in presenting many of their narratives. The relationship between husband and wife is the backdrop against which most of these films are constructed. The producers engage in the revelation of secrets that plague the family institution and threaten its demise. Meyer notes that by focusing on the domestic space and exploring marital conflicts within nuclear and extended family systems, popular films bring to light issues that are of major concern to the populace. The films usually show husbands as "characters who run after sexual pleasure, deceive, and even 'sack' their wife from the house because of a young mistress, and squander money" (Meyer, "Ghanaian Popular Cinema"). As noted in the introductory chapter, female audiences find the exploration of such themes impressive because they portray women—especially housewives—as heroines in the end. Many video films, however, also show that extramarital affairs are becoming a status symbol among successful businessmen as well as a means by

which men of a certain social stature assert their masculinity. Video films like *Marriage Contract, A Stab in the Dark 1-2, Ripples 1-3, A Call at Midnight 1-3, Odasani 1 and 2, Idols of Heart,* and *Mr. Lover Boy in Ghana* explore the negative consequences of men's extramarital affairs on the family. Daniel Buor's findings on the Ghanaian family confirm the images projected in the video films when he observes that Ghanaian families for the past two decades have gone through serious traumatic experiences as a result of the increase in cohabitation, socially illicit sexual unions, and teenage births (44).

Analyzing *Idols of Heart* with reference to a subplot in the film *Dabi Dabi 1,* this chapter explores the sexual practices of men who use sexual virility as a means of proving masculinity. The discussion begins with a careful examination of the quest of Chief Robertson, in *Idols of Heart,* who seeks to prove his sexual virility by having a child at all cost. It explores the effects of sterility on the construction of masculinity and probes why men of influence and affluence still feel unsure of their masculinities and, as a result, use their wealth to sexually violate women. As men embark on creating a distinct masculine identity through sex with multiple partners, they face the destruction of their masculinity through the HIV. The chapter concludes with the representation of sexuality in the films in which sex is part of the plot but is not seen.

Idols of Heart

Idols of Heart juxtaposes the lives of Chief Robertson and his subordinate, Nana Yaw. Chief Robertson is a successful business proprietor who is married to Thelma. Unknown to Thelma, Chief Robertson is sterile, so he is unable to make her pregnant. Because the absence of children in a marriage is, culturally speaking, always blamed on women, Thelma visits one doctor after another and visits multiple prayer meetings, seeking help in order to conceive. Chief Robertson, on the other hand, secretly consults his doctor, who tells him that, medically, he is unable to have a child; therefore, he must seek alternative means of having babies. Chief Robertson shares his frustration with his friend Asante, and together they embark on finding a means to make Thelma pregnant.

Asante introduces Osmond to Chief Robertson, and Chief Robertson agrees to pay Osmond a huge sum of money to sleep with Thelma. Aware of his virility, Osmond decides to make a fortune out of Chief Robertson's predicament. He reappears to Chief Robertson five months into Thelma's pregnancy and threatens that he will reveal the truth to Thelma if Chief Robertson does not pay him a sum of $150,000. Chief Robertson realizes that he is gradually heading toward a public scandal, so he plans to eliminate Osmond, but in the process both men die.

Nana Yaw is Chief Robertson's immediate subordinate at work. Nana Yaw is married to Jemima and has two children. Nana Yaw finds pleasure in sleeping with all potential female employees of the company before they are offered jobs. Nana Yaw and other male characters in the film demonstrate that in "every man's life are memories of being led, as it were, by his penis. ... When the prick stands up, the brains get buried under the ground! When the prick stands up, the brains are as good as dead!" (Bordo 19-20). After an interview, Nana Yaw selects Jane for a position in the company and as a secret sex partner as well. He uses Seth, a close friend and a junior in the company, to send messages to Jane. Seth and Jane become sexually intimate. However, Nana Yaw's indiscriminate sexual activities lead him to contract the HIV.

Sterile [and/or] Impotent Masculinity

In the beginning of *Idols of Heart,* the camera shows the front view of Chief Robertson's mansion and cuts to his bedroom where his wife Thelma is sitting on a bed, crying. The use of the bedroom for this initial scene is symbolic and captures the major theme in the video film: men and sex. It foreshadows the struggles regarding sex and marriage of the major male characters in the film. The close-up shot of Thelma's face shows her agony, implying that an immediate solution is needed for whatever problem she might be having. The camera zooms in and out to produce medium to close-up shots of Thelma and

the bedroom. The medium shots enable viewers to connect Thelma to wealth and affluence. The size of the bedroom, the magnificence of the bed, and the woman's clothes suggest that Thelma may be facing a challenge that cannot be overcome by wealth and affluence.

Soon after these establishing shots, Chief Robertson walks into the bedroom, and he is concerned about his wife's disposition. Alternating between close-up shots and medium shots, viewers discover the cause of Thelma's miserable situation: she needs a child! The woman states that she has prayed to God for a child and that their childlessness is the work of the devil. Chief Robertson's reaction indicates that there is more to the problem than meets the eye. He is calm and collected, but there is serious turbulence going on within him. He tells his wife not to worry, because God will answer their prayers and she will have a child soon. This scene sharply dissolves into the next where Chief Robertson consults with his doctor regarding the issue of impotency.

Chief Robertson's interaction with his doctor makes it clear at this point that Chief Robertson is suffering from infertility (which the doctor refers to as impotence) and is desperate to find a solution to the problem before his wife discovers the truth. As Susan Bordo notes, "we live in a culture that encourages men to think of themselves as their penises, a culture that still conflates male sexuality with something we call 'potency'" (36). The importance of sexual potency is crucial to Chief Robertson, because for him, a man who cannot

successfully penetrate a woman and make babies is unmanly. The failure is not the inability to achieve erection; the lack of it also means lack of power, which causes men's confidence to wane. Annie Potts complains that "the focus on hardness, strength, activity, and endurance in hegemonic masculine sexuality determines how a man measures his own 'success in sex'; it centralizes sex around the penis and universalizes penises" ("The Essence" 89). Sexuality either empowers or renders a man powerless. Any sign of sexual weakness creates a great deal of fear and vulnerability among men. The initial scenes in the video film do not clearly establish Chief Robertson's occupation and social stature, but one can see that he commands substantial wealth. Despite his wealth, there seems to be something uncertain about his character; he displays a kind of internal fragility that causes uncertainty in his moves. Viewers begin to understand this fragility when he meets to discuss his problem with his doctor.

Chief Robertson's predicament is beyond his inability to have an erect penis. Viewers learn later in the film that he and his wife have sex daily, so he is fighting a battle beyond erection. The meeting with the doctor, though, does not help Chief Robertson's situation. The doctor does not offer any message of hope to alleviate Chief Robertson's internal fragility. The doctor tells him that most of the research on impotence is still experimental, but that there are alternatives such as adopting babies, artificial insemination, and—the most difficult, crude, and immoral solution—asking the woman to secretly meet another man. The

doctor's suggestions reveal that the reason Chief Robertson is seeking medical attention for his problem is not for sexual gratification but to have a baby, and thereby fulfil a societal expectation.

The film further substantiates Chief Robertson's delicate situation in a scene where he meets with two other friends in Asante's house. The scene opens with a lively conversation between the three characters, and Chief Robertson is at the centre of the conversation. His placement within the frame and the mise-en-scène authenticates that his friends have a lot of respect for him. He is regarded in high esteem. This respect is further endorsed when Asante joins the group in the middle of their conversation, shakes hands with the three visitors, and calls Chief Robertson by name. The manner in which Asante calls Chief Robertson reveals the former's respect for the latter. However, Chief Robertson's joy is short lived. Asante presents a drink to the group and asks them to pray for his son, who has just arrived from abroad. Asante says that his son is a very responsible man and needs the blessing of the elders. One of the men, adding his voice to the importance of having good children, states that it is good to have children. Another concludes that any man who does not have a child is like an empty barrel. The elder's comment demonstrates the power of the phallus on male sexual identity and the disturbance produced as a result of lack of perceived phallic power. In this case, Chief Robertson is symbolically substituted for the penis, and the downfall of

the penis-person thus amounts to death. As these men speak, the camera focuses on Chief Robertson; his reaction to the comments is crucial to the development of the plot. His composure changes and he enters a state of bleakness as the discussions proceed. His demeanour falls flat and he cannot sit straight. He bends his head in disgrace, looking like someone in deep meditation.

This scene is crucial to the interpretation of impotency, not only in the film but in Ghanaian society at large. The images and the positions of the characters within the frame reflect a typical situation in Ghanaian society. The scene is a deliberate effort of the filmmaker to arouse traditional images in viewers' minds. First, the four people are men, and they sit is a semi-circle—a typical seating arrangement of traditional elders. Second, a bottle of drink is presented, and Asante requests libation to be poured for his illustrious son. Libation in Ghanaian society is offered to the ancestors as convocation for auspicious events. It is usually done by a traditional priest or a designated elder. It involves the pouring of either water or wine on the ground in a special pattern while homage is paid to the ancestors. Although *Idols of Heart* is set in the city, the filmmaker integrates traditional images into it in order to give the issue of infertility among men a traditional relevance. Chief Robertson spends the rest of the time with his friends in pain and does not even drink the liquor Asante offers. A series of close-up shots of Chief Robertson establish his

internal turmoil and disgrace. He shakes his head, twists his lips, and pretends to behave normally, but his body language betrays him.

Chief Robertson is faced with a medical condition made complex by cultural interpretations of infertility commonly referred to as impotence. His condition is expressed in Susan Bordo's dilemma: "*Impotence*. The word rings with disgrace and humiliation. ... Unlike disorders, impotence implicates the whole man, not merely the body part. *He is impotent*. Would we ever say about a person with a headache *'He is a headache'?*" (59). The use of the word impotence to define male erection difficulties is misleading and destructive. The meaning of the word does not necessarily denote a man who has the medical problem of not being able to have an erection. The word creates the idea of someone who is useless and has no power. Chief Robertson, although a successful businessman, loses all his virtues to impotence. His success in business and positive human qualities are camouflaged because he is impotent. Chief Robertson's predicament and its consequences show that "the worst thing a man can be is impotent. Indeed to be in this condition is regarded—even by oneself—as being something less than a man" (Hoch 102).

Throughout the film, Chief Robertson is seen struggling by any means possible to have kids even if it means the kids being fathered by another man. His life is consumed with his attempt to solve a problem of social perception. He considers himself a social misfit, despite his wealth and his excellent human

qualities. Although wealth is a sign of dominant masculinity in the film, a wealthy man who is infertile is treated with disdain. Chief Robertson's life suffers continual retrogression as he persistently seeks divergent avenues to correct his problem. The importance society place on the penis makes it assume a dimension beyond a mere body part.

Any form of sexual problem negatively affects men in Ghanaian society. Apart from the medical implications there are terrible societal consequences. Premature ejaculation for example, degrades the man because it creates an image of someone who is not in control. In this situation the man has "achieved an erection and has produced the goods, so to speak, but his timing is off. As the phallic substitute, his penis-person has failed to fulfill one of the crucial requirements of 'proper' phallic 'modeling': it has stood up, firmed up but it has also, regrettably, sped up. It has defeated itself in the test of endurance" (Potts, "The Essence" 92). The power of the penis is a cultural construction to which men are expected to conform. The video film demonstrates that the inability to perform sexually is a stigma and reduces a man's position in society. Chief Robertson is desperate because he seems to lack control in his domestic affairs. He is not in absolute control of situations, and hence is not man enough.

Irrespective of the medical condition of a man's sexual disability, Ghanaian society is not interested in the medical interpretation of the problem; a married man is expected to father a child! Chief Robertson's problem is

related to fertility because Thelma confesses to her mother that she and Chief have sex daily. However, this does not make any difference insofar as he cannot produce any offspring. He is referred to as impotent by the characters that make reference to his condition. The inability of men to separate their masculinity from sexuality causes them untold hardships and determines how they operate in other areas of their lives. Chief Robertson rejects the idea of artificial insemination and adoption; instead, he is determined by any means possible to prove to his wife and society that he is man enough. He decides to embark on a horrendous means of getting his wife pregnant. The process of seeking masculinity through having children renders Chief Robertson vulnerable to circumstances he could not control.

Asante is the only friend who knows the details of Chief Robertson's predicament, and he is very sympathetic. Out of desperation, Asante recommends Osmond to Chief Robertson. The three men meet, and Osmond is paid a large undisclosed amount to sleep with Thelma. On a scheduled date, Osmond comes to Chief Robertson's house and, after Chief Robertson drugs his wife, Osmond rapes her.

This driving need to prove his masculinity causes Chief Robertson to stoop very low by paying Osmond to rape Thelma. It is a humiliating moment for him. He sits in the kitchen and gets himself drunk on alcohol, knowing that Osmond is in the bedroom raping Thelma. The filmmaker strategically places

Chief Robertson in the kitchen—a room in the house connected to femininity. Chief Robertson's case is not just a medical problem; it is also a social one and has negative repercussions on his social image as Chief Executive Officer of his company and as a husband. The construction of his gender identity is at stake if he cannot have a child. Since sexuality is a social construction, gender becomes the foundation upon which sexuality is constructed:

> For men, the notion of masculinity, the cultural definition of manhood, serves as the primary building block of sexuality. It is through our understanding of masculinity that we construct a sexuality, and it is through our sexualities that we confirm the successful construction of our gender identity. Gender informs sexuality; sexuality confirms gender. Thus men have much at stake when they confront a sexual problem: they risk their self-image as men. (Kimmel, *The Gender of Desire* 142)

Chief Robertson is caught in a web in which he has to reconstruct himself because society views him as an incompetent man. The understanding of masculinity as portrayed in the film has to do with sexual virility. He cannot confirm his identity as a man with a child because he can only gain confirmation into the masculine gender through having kids. His problem, therefore, puts him at risk of suffering incessant humiliation. His dedication to having a child is not because he loves babies; he is in a battle to redeem his masculinity, without which he is considered less than a man. His inability to impregnate his wife means he will not have an heir who will inherit his properties. Also, he needs to demonstrate at home, the power and authority he

has at work by conquering his wife through making her pregnant. The inability to do so renders him less than a man. After consistently having sex with his wife, he notes that he needs more than just the sexual act. What he needs is: a child! There is a point in a man's life when sexual intercourse ceases to bestow power on him. The ability to have sex has a limitation as far as the construction of masculinity is concerned. Beyond the sexual act, it is required that men produce offspring out of their own loins. Masculinity that is connected to having children demands the erect penis produce semen to fertilize an egg. For this reason, Chief Robertson needs more than sexual intercourse. He needs a child. He is in a fragile state, and a child is not simply part of the family tree; to him, a child will redeem his image and restore his manhood, both privately and publicly.

As is the case in many cinematic visual cultures, Ghanaian filmmakers rely on traditional Ghanaian images to emphasize the seriousness of the problems of sexuality in daily life. This is obvious in Chief Robertson's situation. Lisa Jean Moore's question is worth examining here: "What happens when the performance of masculinity produces what is perceived as a profoundly 'unmasculine' result in the form of lower sperm counts, and even infertility?" (26). In Ghanaian societies, impotence and sterility are regarded as unfortunate situations, and either could be a strong basis for divorce. The ability to penetrate a woman sexually is not enough; a man is expected to father

a child. Nukunya explains that a "sterile husband does not find favour with his wife or with her relatives ... Sterility and impotence are both shameful diseases, and men do not easily admit them, especially the latter" (*Kinship and Marriage* 110). Nukunya further states that among the Anlos, for example, they "clearly distinguish between sexual vigour or desire, *lili*, and the power of procreation, *vidzidzi*. They know that a man who is sterile, *tsidzenyela*, i.e., 'producer of coloured sperm,' lacks the latter but is not necessarily deficient in the former. (It is said that the fertile sperm is white and the unproductive coloured)" (*Kinship and Marriage*, 110).

The colour coding of the fertile and the infertile semen reinforces the idea that masculinity is something that is pure, wholesome, original, and superior. The description also enforces the difference between successful and failed masculinities, pointing to the fact that a man can be recognized and defined by the accomplishment of his sperm. One crucial component for this description is how the characteristics of the sperm (coloured, impure, unoriginal) is projected unto the man who produces them. Chief Robertson experiences the psychological consequences of being infertile in the form of both private and public embarrassment, disgrace, misery, and shame. He is regarded as a social misfit as a result of producing semen that is "unmasculine." He has reached a stage where the masculinity bestowed upon him as a married man has almost expired. Since masculinity is presented as a

journey with no designated end, it demands that men update their masculine status continuously. It is a journey with no return—a road that is always under construction. Moore is quite right when she notes the following:

> Ultimately, sperm is not involved only in the physical reproduction of males and females but in how we come to understand ourselves as men and women. The ways in which we choose to manage and assign meaning to sperm indicates the recalcitrance of our stereotypes about gender. This gendered social order is both reinforced and destabilized by the meanings assigned to semen and the manipulation of sperm's potential. (12)

When Chief Robertson first appears in the film, there is something superficial about him. Though the details of his problem unfold later, it is obvious at his initial appearance that he does not have a fulfilled life. The shifts between close-up and medium shots at the beginning foreshadow the instability and uncertainty in Chief Robertson's character. In this manner, the camera is actively involved in telling Chief Robertson's story by placing him in a contradictory position as a man of authority who does not have authority.

A subplot in the film *Dabi Dabi 1*, revolving around Boja, enhances understanding of the negative ramifications of impotency. This film, set in a rural area, points to the fact that irrespective of a man's geographical location, sterility or impotency is a devastating body deformity. The threat of being emasculated due to erectile dysfunction causes Boja to murder his wife. Boja's wife repeatedly quarrels with him because of his inability to satisfy her

sexually. The woman feels she is no longer attracted to the man, and that is why he cannot get an erection. The erect penis is an indication that the man desires her, and the inability to do so is a demonstration that she does not have the ability to appeal to his desire. Potts explains that "while he may equate loss of penile (thrust)-power with loss—or death—of his self, without this show of affection, she is less herself; she is deprived of completion, doomed to remain fragmentary (as woman)" ("The Essence" 96). Thus, Boja's impotence has negative ramifications on his wife as well. The woman embarks on searching for means by which she can help her husband fix the problem.

Boja suffers continuous humiliation among his peers because of his predicament. In a scene set at the village square, Boja joins some of his friends who were drinking and having a good time. They question Boja about his problem, and he vigorously denies being impotent; admitting this weakness to his peers may incur further embarrassment. The village square is the place where important decisions are made, and this is evidenced in many instances throughout the film. Boja realizes that his erectile dysfunction is no longer a domestic problem but that he is heading for disgrace. Some of the men in the group boast about their sexual prowess in order to reveal Boja's weakness. They treat him as someone having a terminal disease needing immediate medical attention. Boja's situation at this moment does not have to do with his body part (penis); rather, the whole body is rendered deformed. The penis represents

the "miniature male-body," which, if unable to perform normally (thrusting and penetrating "like a man") ultimately feminizes the man and represents loss of control over the mind and body. Potts explains that the "loss of the penis-body's power to pierce and thrust extends to the entire male-body, disabling him, de-sexing him, and submitting him—to 'impotency'. Both of his selves are emasculated. He is then, feminized, and—like a woman—he has no control over his body: there is no mind over matter" (Potts, "The Essence" 94). Boja suffers from a medical problem which affects part of his body but events surrounding his problem show that his whole person has been implicated. He is emasculated and ridiculed because he does not have what it takes to be a masculine figure in this society. Boja is in a terrible situation because his problem has been given severe societal implications making it impossible for him to find redress for his condition.

Boja's friends, like Chief Robertson's, are elders. The venue where these elders question Boja makes the confrontation even more humiliating. Boja is feminized as he fails to convince his friends that he does not have a sexual problem. Boja's experience at the village square and Chief Robertson's encounter with his friends at Asante's house show that men become paranoid when their sexual weakness is made public. Boja tries to remain steady, making sure that he does not show any sign of weakness. Some of his friends are ready to help him; others use the opportunity to describe how sexually active they

are, including one man who challenges the group members to confirm it from his wife. Such a proposal leaves Boja shaken.

It is difficult for Boja to seek any form of medication because he denies that he has erectile dysfunction. Boja's wife is unable to tolerate her husband's condition, so she reports the case to the queen mother. When Boja is informed that his wife is in the process of divorcing him due to his condition, he becomes scared of public dishonour. To avoid any further disgrace, he kills his wife by hitting her with a club.

Boja's ultimate violence against his wife further demonstrates that sexual virility is not for pleasure only; it also determines a man's manhood and possibly social status. At this point, the penis takes on the characteristics of its symbolic other, the phallus, "which is eternally and inhumanly perfect and sets a standard that no man or woman, embodies" (Steward 606). The organ represents elevated social status and power in Ghanaian culture. Therefore, Boja uses barbaric means to eliminate his wife when threatened with divorce.

Boja's predicament also shows that men in the village face the same ridicule and scorn as the men in the city. Thorn is accurate when he observes that "consciously or unconsciously, the penis is the very centre of human life: love, sex passion, lust, procreation, offspring—all these and more—pass through his amazing urge or the absence of it" (20). The penis rules in the lives of men because their identity revolves around sexual virility. Boja's life is

consumed by his erectile dysfunction rather than his prestigious position as an elder in the village, and Chief Robertson's life revolves around his sterility rather than his position as CEO of his company.

It is evident that Chief Robertson and Boja are responsible, law-abiding citizens until their problems of impotency become known publicly. Anytime the issue is raised, both characters feel ashamed and emasculated. Their problem goes beyond fathering children; the very existence of their lives is in danger. The positions Chief Robertson and Boja occupy in society complicate their conditions. Chief Robertson is a wealthy man and well respected in his community; Boja belongs to the council of elders in his village. The way they handle their predicaments implies that being unable to have children is equal to death. The film demonstrates how sexuality is identical with self-identity; hence, "the correction of erectile incompetence becomes, therefore, of urgent concern. For the man, the restoration of his stability and solidity corrects his 'self'-perception, repositioning him in his proper (upright) place as an identifiable real man. He comes to life again" (Potts, "The Essence" 96). To Chief Robertson and Boja, their condition marks the demise of their masculinity, which is worse than physical death. Lack of children in their marriages strips them of their hard work over the years. *Idols of Heart* and *Dabi Dabi 1* show that children occupy a central position in Ghanaian marriages, as Gyekye describes in the following passage:

> In the African view the whole or ultimate purpose of marriage is procreation—to produce children who will continue with the heritage and name of the family, so that the family does not diminish or disappear. Barrenness and sterility are considered a threat to the continuity of human life and existence. Children are so important that, in traditional life, the inability to bear children is considered a very great calamity ... (83)

Many Ghanaian video films portray how wealth and paid employment are crucial to the construction of masculinity, but wealth or political affiliation is insufficient. The inability to procreate is even more catastrophic, since lack of children is disastrous to a marriage. Boja's inability to perform sexually renders him an object of ridicule before his peers because for "most males, the loss of power of any kind can be very threatening, but the loss of sexual power can be overwhelming" (Morris 121). Boja's wife speaks rudely to him because a flaccid penis denotes powerlessness. He cannot tame his wife and cause her to submit to his authority because he lacks sexual power. Boja's powerlessness does not have to do with his erectile dysfunction alone; he does not have any authority at home, even though he is supposed to be the head of the household. He cannot challenge his wife's rudeness and disrespect. After complaining several times without seeing a change, the woman stops performing her domestic duties, including cooking and washing, because she believes an impotent man does not deserve to be served. As Potts points out, "failure of the penis to become erect signifies the downfall of this phallic economy as it dictates the sexual identities

of both men and women. It denotes the deficiency of the man—his failure robustly to represent the phallus" ("The Essence" 87).

Boja and Chief Robertson have distinct sexual problems, but the consequences are the same: they cannot father a child. As noted above, lack of children in a marriage poses a terrible threat to men's masculinity because "childless individuals ... are scorned and despised. Among the Akan, an impotent (hence, childless) man is given the name *kte krawa,* or inadequate penis" (Ampofo 122). Masculinity, when linked to the ability to penetrate a woman sexually and produce children, emasculates men who are unable to perform one or both tasks successfully. The fear of their emasculation leads them to acts of violence in their quest to destroy evidence that points to their predicament. Their exposure strips them of power, respect, and any privileged position they occupy. Dissecting the connection between male power and impotence, Jackson outlines:

> That the failure of a man to penetrate a woman with his penis should be described in both scientific and everyday language as "impotence" is perhaps not insignificant in terms of understanding heterosexuality and its relationship to male power. "Impotent" means powerless, and carries the implication that a man who is unable to penetrate a woman is also unable to exercise power over her; his penis is or should be a "tool" of male power ("tool" being slang for penis) and his failure to use it as such is, under male supremacy, a double disgrace, since he not only suffers a personal loss of status and power in relation to a particular woman but also, as it were, lets the side down. (74)

As the lives of Chief Robertson and Boja show, impotence means lack of power over others, which is why these men see themselves as inadequate. If masculinity is connected to the ability to produce children, a man who is childless does not have masculinity; hence, he is less than a man, not man enough, and in some instances, he is a woman. Unable to hide their disabilities any longer, Chief Robertson and Boja resort to gruesome, violent acts to protect their images and save face among their peers. The pressure from society leaves these men with little or no choice but to be drawn into horrendous acts of violence against themselves and their spouses.

Idols of Heart and *Dabi Dabi 1* present conflicting images of men's sexualities because men who are sexually active are considered undisciplined, while those who lack sexual power are feminized. Those who lack sexual potency pursue the restoration of their sex life through cruel means, and those who are sexually active engage in extramarital sex. Paradoxically, men who are sexually active are faced with emasculation through sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. Such men are considered undisciplined because of their inability to control their sexual desires.

Extramarital Sex: A Sign of Masculinity?

Idols of Heart proposes that sexual virility confers masculinity on men, and it is through sex that some men exert authority over women. A major theme in the

film is how some men objectify women and use them as consumer products. While Chief Robertson is struggling to correct his sexual deformity, Nana Yaw hops from one woman to the other, making sure that he sleeps with as many women as possible. His first appearance in the film shows his disturbing philosophy regarding sex. The door of his office opens suddenly, and one of the female workers enters. As soon as he sees the woman, Nana Yaw begins to harshly question why she entered without invitation. Subsequent conversation reveals that Nana Yaw and the woman once shared a bed. The woman is agitated because Nana Yaw has dumped her for Jane, a new female employee of the company. Nana Yaw insists that his sexual intimacy with the woman was business, as the woman used her body in exchange for the job. The interaction between these two characters is an indication of the meaning these characters attach to sexual intimacy. Nana Yaw uses sex as a means to make himself popular among his peers and does not care about the feelings of his female workers. He objectifies women, and by so doing reduces them to nonentities. He does not consider them to have emotions like himself. This is how Stoltenberg describes the situation:

> When a man sexually objectifies someone—that is, when he regards another person's body as a thing, not another self, for the purpose of his own subjective sexual stimulation—he is not terribly likely to be perceptive of what is happening to anyone other than himself. Actually, the man is likely to be completely oblivious to what is happening to the person he is objectifying, because once he objectifies that person—once

> he reduces the person in his mind to the object he desires—then the person, to him, is by definition not a real subject like himself. (42)

Nana Yaw is involved with multiple women, but he is not emotionally attached to any of them. He is never concerned about the consequences of his extramarital affairs.

Another scene on the company premises further illustrates that sex is like sport for Nana Yaw. To imitate and assert their supremacy through sex, other male colleagues in the company compete with him. The scene opens in the office of four smartly dressed young men who are, rather than performing their duties, having fun discussing their sexual encounters. One of the men draws his colleagues' attention to a number of women arriving to hear the results of the interviews they attended. As the women pass by, the men make comments about their sexual interactions with them; some of them describe their sexual acts with specific women; others share the frustrations they went through before they were able to subdue certain women. They accuse their boss, Nana Yaw for tainting the women and causing some of them to not succumb.

The sexual objectification of these women is exhibited in the language these men use to describe their interactions with them. It is a means by which they maintain and enforce male supremacy. It is a process through which they compete with Nana Yaw for women. As they talk about their experiences, they become very excited. There is a sense of fulfilment in their descriptions. The

women are like trophies of war that were conquered by these men. The men induced these women to have sex with them with the promise that they would help them get jobs in the company. Although this sexual objectification does not always lead immediately to sexual violence, it is a process of the dehumanization, which has potential sexual violence at the end. Stoltenberg explains that the "depersonalization that begins in sexual objectification is what makes violence possible; for once you have made a person out to be a thing, you can do anything to it you want" (48). Nana Yaw and other male colleagues engaged in this dehumanization act do not care about the emotions of the women. They are not even concerned whether they get the job because they are aware it is not in their power to employ.

Nana Yaw is actively engaged in extramarital affairs, and he uses adultery as part of his masculine identity. His active extramarital life is known to his colleagues, and he is highly admired by his male counterparts due to his sexual prowess. His unfaithfulness is obvious, yet society, ambivalent about men's promiscuity, endorses this negative behaviour. The double standard prevalent in this society regarding men's unfaithfulness suggests that men are expected to be unfaithful, so it is not a big deal if a man engages in extramarital affairs as long as he keeps the relationship a secret from his immediate family members. In reference to the works of Atwater, Beach, Jouriles and O'Leary, and Thompson, Larry Morris outlines the top ten reasons why extramarital

activities occur. Among them are "a need for variety, hostility toward the other spouse, curiosity, a need for more personal intimacy, personal growth and self-esteem issues, less of a commitment to the institution of marriage, and overall marital dissatisfaction" (49).

Nana Yaw is unfaithful in marriage due to the encouragements he receives from other males to "'play around a little' if the opportunity presents itself" (Morris 49). Romantic relationships in the film highlight the fact that sexual intimacy with multiple partners is a means by which some men assert their masculinity among their peers. Although only one scene in the film features the men in the office discussing their sexual encounters, their references indicate that it is a normal practice among the group to "play around."

In *Idols of Heart,* it is taboo for women to engage in extramarital sex, and it is also forbidden for a woman to be the initiator of sexual intimacy with a man. Research by Ember and Ember revealed that extramarital activities among men are a global issue, as 54% of cultures around the world allow husbands to have sex outside marriage; on the other hand, only 11% of cultures condone extramarital activities on the part of wives. Ghanaian video films are very critical of women who cheat on their husbands, but cheating husbands do not receive the same level of criticism. This ideology reinforces gender inequality

and portrays how power is unequally distributed. Women who are sexually active are considered taboo subjects because:

> Women are raised to believe that to be sexually active or promiscuous is to transgress the rules of femininity. These rules are enforced not just by men, of course, but also by other women, and institutionalized by church, state, and school. The pursuit of sex transforms good girls into bad girls, so most women accept the cultural standard of sexual minimalism—few partners, fewer positions, less pleasure, less sex without emotional commitment. (Kimmel, *The Gender of Desire* 5)

Women who are sexually active are required to control their sexual desires, or else they become reprobates. The disparity of sexual desire between male and female makes sex a contest for some men, and these men consider sexual pleasure as a conquest rather than a connection (Kimmel, *The Gender of Desire* 5). Multiple sexual partners are considered taboo for women, but are accepted for men. *Idols of Heart* suggests many reasons why men engage in extramarital affairs, but the common denominator underlying all the reasons is that sex is a means by which men validate their masculinity.

Consequences of Extramarital Affairs

Nana Yaw is regularly away from home engaging in sex with multiple women, yet he expects Jemima to stay at home and be faithful to him. In the film, the man is not seen as having any form of intimacy with his wife and children. Jemima is a stay-at-home mother who is like a piece of property, since Nana Yaw will not spend time with her or share the same bed with her. Jemima's

frustration with her husband's behaviour leads her to refuse her husband's sexual advances. In the argument that ensues, Jemima makes Nana Yaw understand that she will not permit him to share the same bed with her unless he changes his adulterous life. Jemima is resolute on her position because she has very strong charismatic Christian perspectives in which sex outside marriage is a grievous sin.

Jemima's act makes a statement that the time when women languish in agony waiting for their unfaithful husbands to come home and treat them like pieces of property is over. She stands for the principle that women must take charge of their bodies and confront their unfaithful husbands. Jane is another character that interrupts the traditional construction of female sexuality in the film. Soon after Jane and Nana Yaw's relationship begins, Jane secretly initiates sexual intimacy with Seth, knowing that she has no future with Nana Yaw. When Jane makes the first move toward a sexual relationship with Seth, this denotes an interruption of the sexual pattern in which it is taboo for women to call for sex. Jane's action supports Kimmel's assertion that over the years the sexual gap between men and women has been closing:

> Despite the persistence of gender differences in sexual attitudes and behaviours, the sexual gap has been closing in recent years, as women's and men's sexual experiences come to more closely resemble one another's. Or, rather, women's experiences have come to resemble men's. ... While men's sexual behaviour has hardly changed, women's sexuality has changed dramatically, moving increasingly closer to the behaviour of

> men. (This probably both thrills and terrifies men). (*The Gender of Desire* 11)

Jane represents a channel through which the sexual gap between men and women is closing, but the pursuit of sex for the sake of pleasure alone is not openly available to women in the film. Jane's position as the initiator of sexual intimacy with Seth reverses the power structure by putting Jane on the same level as Nana Yaw. But Jane's initiative is considered a disaster; the film portrays her as whore and not as a serious-minded woman. Irrespective of how society views Jane and how the filmmaker represents her, she assumes the status of the new woman who knows that she has a right to her body. She thinks that she is entitled to sexual pleasure and proceeds to find the means to obtain it. Nana Yaw, dealing with two strong-willed women in his life, fails miserably to please either of them.

Despite the moves these women make, the dominant position of the male is still intact. Women's dependency on men, especially for financial support, empowers men over women, leading men to take advantage of women and treat them as the weaker sex. Jane and Jemima depend on Nana Yaw for financial support to survive. Also, he is able to dominate these women because women overwhelmingly support the privileged position of men in society:

> Woman herself recognizes that the world is masculine on the whole; those who fashioned it, ruled it, and still dominate it today are men. As for her, she does not consider herself responsible for it; it is understood that she is inferior and dependent; she has not learned the lessons of violence, she has never stood forth as subject before the other members of the group. Shut up in her flesh, her home, she sees herself as passive before these gods with human faces who set their goals and establish values. (Beauvoir 598)

Female reliance on male ideology is highly entrenched in the film, and that is what makes it impossible for the women to take absolute control of their destinies and live their lives as they wish. Extramarital affairs have devastating consequences for the wives in these films. Though Jemima takes control of her body and refuses to have sex with her husband, she never feels at peace within herself. Her appearance throughout the film denotes someone undergoing severe emotional torture. Her position as a stay-at-home mother with two children to care for does not help her situation.

Nana Yaw keeps his wife like a prisoner within the confines of the house. The only times Jemima is seen outside the home is during a church service and at the hospital when Nana Yaw is involved in an accident. Nana Yaw is an absent husband and father, always out of the house, pretending to be busy with his work. Just as he abandons his wife alone at home, he keeps Jane isolated and does not see her for many days between meetings. He does not permit his wife to work, but she is expected to dress up and look beautiful. Reynaud's analysis can be used to illustrate Nana Yaw's manipulative schemes:

> Man manages to get a woman to sacrifice herself in return for his apparent generosity; he generally ensures that his wife is financially dependent on him, and it's not too difficult to keep her at home. His schemes are usually so effective that most of the time he succeeds in persuading her that his own interests are those of the "couple" or the "child," and that his advantages are those of his wife. (89)

Jemima is swallowed up in the building, with all her dreams and aspirations buried in the house. Nana Yaw makes her believe that being a housewife is for the betterment of the family. However, being a housewife is burdensome to her. Her children ask her nagging questions as to why their father does not stay home. A sad scene occurs one evening during dinner when Jemima asks their little daughter to pray. Instead of the prayer usually said before meals, the girl asks God to bring back her daddy. Later in the night when they go to bed, their son, Junior refuses to sleep because he wants his father to come back and tell them stories. Jemima offers to tell them a story, but Junior insists that he wants daddy's story. Despite the presence of the children, Jemima feels lonely and bored, and the children's agitation for the presence of their father makes her feel old and unwanted.

Abandoning Jemima and the children in the house is a carefully orchestrated move on Nana Yaw's part that renders her undesirable to other men. Reynaud notes that because men do not trust that love is enough to guarantee the private ownership of their wives' vaginas and uteruses, they try as much as possible to render the women unattractive "or even unfit for sexual

use by another man" (92). Though Nana Yaw provides for Jemima in such a way as to meet all her possible material needs, she is not happy and always feels as if she is a prisoner within the walls of the house. The man keeps her in the house to suffocate and subdue her. Her emotional needs are not taken care of, as the man is like a stranger at home. The major consequence of Nana Yaw's action is alienation from his children. Not once is he shown in the film as having any intimacy with his children. One wonders if he even knows them since they are always asleep before he gets back from work.

On the other hand, Jane's actions seem to bridge the gap and send out a strong message to adulterous men who take advantage of young single women. Jane's sexual intimacy with Seth sends a signal to women that when men objectify women and reduce them to sex symbols, such women can find alternative outlet to satisfy their sexual desires. Jane uses money to lure Seth to her side, and she calls for sex anytime she wants. Her access to Nana Yaw's wealth gives her the right of entry into the masculine world, where she becomes the sole initiator of her sexual affairs with Seth. Jane determines the scope of her relationship with Seth. Although she closes the sexual gap between herself and Nana Yaw, not all women have the opportunity to find an alternative outlet for their sexual desires. Jane's position shows that women who have access to wealth and good social standing can gain entry to the masculine world of sex, even though such women cannot openly express their sexual practices due to

incurring public displeasure. Kimmel's point that bridging the gap of sexuality between men and women both thrills and terrifies men is true of this video film. Everything about Jane's character is presented as a deviation from the norm. She is positioned to be financially dependent on Nana Yaw, so the power structure places her at the receiving end.

Idols of Heart does not endorse Jane's actions. When Nana Yaw suspects that there is something unusual going on between Seth and Jane, he gets angry with Jane and speaks rudely to her. Men repeatedly inform women that it is the woman's duty to remain faithful, but men are not expected to stick to one sexual partner. The insistence on women's faithfulness promotes the dominance of men over women and does not promote equality in their relationships. Extramarital affairs are a major threat to the institution of marriage, because many married men find it difficult to maintain a nurturing relationship with one partner. The married life of Nana Yaw and Jemima can best be described as a master-servant relationship, as the man does not encourage intimacy with his wife. Nana Yaw's final ruin comes when he contracts the HIV.

AIDS and Masculinity

AIDS is a deadly disease that threatens men's masculinity. Lack of a cure for AIDS has made any kind of sexual behaviour more risky today than ever

before. Even people who are careful in their sexual practices stand the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases from careless partners. Sexually active people not only stand the risk of being infected with HIV, but also of transmitting it to their partners. The disease is a danger to economic activities in a country like Ghana since people between the ages of 15 and 49 are most commonly infected (Boafo). According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), although the rate of infection has remained comparatively low, Ghana is at risk of further spread of the disease due to factors such as inaccurate awareness of personal risks and certain marriage practices and gender relations. The USAID report confirms Morris's point that most "heterosexual males know not only little about sex in general but they tend to know even less about the dangers lurking under the sexual bed" (162). Lack of awareness continues to be the major reason for the spread of the disease.

It is evening, and Jemima is in the bedroom in her nightgown, sitting in front of the dressing mirror removing make-up from her face. Nana Yaw comes behind her and admires her. He holds her from behind in an attempt to initiate sexual intercourse. (This is the only time in the film Nana Yaw talks civilly to his wife.) Jemima violently pushes him back, and he quickly reminds her that she cannot refuse her husband sex. The woman quickly reminds him that he lost his position as a husband when he committed adultery. To make his case

stronger and also to show that he is the man of the house, Nana Yaw moves to face Jemima. The man defends himself by saying that he is an African and can have as many wives as possible. When Nana Yaw realizes that Jemima will not easily give in, he attempts to rape her. During the struggle, he breaks the dressing mirror and is badly hurt. He is rushed to the hospital and it is discovered that he is HIV positive. This scene is the breaking point for Nana Yaw's sexual life.

The broken mirror foreshadows his broken masculinity as the revelation of the medical report shatters his life. Rachel Spronk explains that "having sex contributes positively to feeling masculine and hence to identifying as a man. Moreover, it reaffirms being an attractive person, being identified as a sexual person and being recognized as one who enjoys the sexual experience" (60). As far as Nana Yaw is concerned, the ability to sleep with all the female workers in the company defines his manhood and having multiple sexual partners is part of the process of growth and represents the attainment of masculinity.

The news of Nana Yaw's illness is devastating to the family because he is the sole breadwinner. Nana Yaw's reaction to the news indicates that he is not only confronted with fighting for his life, but for his masculinity as well. Sex is a major means by which he asserts his masculinity before his colleagues at work. He believes in the ideology that the penis is the centre of the universe, so he uses his penis to conquer women and maintain authority over them. Among his

male colleagues, he is unanimously recognized and praised for his flirtatious life. The other male workers accept their subordinate positions as far as competing for girls is concerned. The masculine subculture in Nana Yaw's workplace is constructed around sexual virility, so with the doctor's confirmation that he is infected with the HIV, Nana Yaw realizes that what best establishes his masculine identity among his peers has been stripped away.

He faces further humiliation when he calls his boss, Chief Robertson, and breaks the news to him. Upon hearing the news, Chief Robertson reminds Nana Yaw that he has cautioned him several times to use condoms. Nana Yaw had always protested that he does not enjoy sex with condoms. In his opinion, having protected sex reduces his status as a man. The valorisation of the penis as a power tool makes protective sex less attractive among some men. Campbell writes, "'real men' have insatiable urges to seek pleasure through unprotected sex with large numbers of women. There is a corresponding macho lack of concern for the consequences" (226, 227). Nana Yaw's multiple-partner sexual behaviour is not a mere adventure in the world of sex, but a way of proving his manhood. Using condoms defeats this purpose. According to Potts, the use of a condom blocks the ejaculation of sperm and halts its penetration into the vagina and ovum, thus thwarting the ultimate expression of masculinity:

> The condom spells death to their military manoeuvre –military, because the ways that heterosexuality is discursively constructed associate masculine sexuality with violence . . . whether it is the sperm 'piercing'

> the ovum, the penis penetrating the vagina, the man sweeping her off her feet, her passive feminine sexuality succumbs to his active masculine sexuality—an active male sexuality which is at times 'seemingly' beyond his control. ("The Man with Two Brains" 151)

The quest to be in charge at all times causes men like Nana Yaw to have unprotected sex despite the deadly consequences. Trying to be helpful, Chief Robertson tells Nana Yaw to travel abroad to seek a solution to his problem. Nana Yaw responds painfully to the suggestion because he sees the proposal as a means of rejection. He asks whether his boss wants him to go abroad and die there. Nana Yaw realizes that he has lost something more than his health. He has a good job, so it is possible he can afford the drugs, thereby allowing him to live many more years, but he behaves as if he were going to be dying the next moment. He does not ask his doctor about the medical implications of his condition and what he can do to avert them or to make the situation better; instead, he organizes a pity-party for himself.

The threat of AIDS is not only a health hazard, but a masculine disability. Just as the virus attacks, infects, and disables a person's immune system, the announcement of the disease attacks and weakens Nana Yaw's masculine status. In his present condition, he realizes that he has lost what it takes to maintain his domination over his male and female colleagues. He suffers a double agony because he has to deal with the health hazard as well as find other means of asserting his masculinity. The HIV in Nana Yaw's system

could be described as a sexual deformity because it takes away part of his masculinity.

Representations of Sexuality

The representations of sexuality in *Idols of Heart* portray sex as an act from which men derive pleasure or prove their masculinity; this implies that female enjoyment is not the main concern. Viewers are told about sex rather than shown sex. Graphic representation of sex is not condoned in Ghanaian visual culture. Because open discussions of sex are considered taboo, filmmakers are careful not to show close-up shots of parts of the body that are regarded as "indecent." Writing on the representations of sexuality in African cinema, Alexie Tcheuyap asks four important questions: "If one admits that sex needs to be represented, how should it be done? According to what rules? Considering that film discourse operates through images, how do these images articulate sex? And what are the modalities of this discourse?" (145)

Nana Yaw is represented as a sex-hungry man, but his sexual exploits are discussed rather than graphically represented. His male colleagues describe their sexual encounters to one another, but none of them is shown in the role of having sex. Taking a closer look at the sex scenes in the film it is apparent that "sex is more often mentioned than seen in African films. ... Sex is represented

in films, but implicitly rather than openly. It is present in the story, but absent from the plot. In this context, ellipsis plays a fundamental role" (Tcheuyap 145).

The first sexual encounter between Jane and Nana Yaw takes place in an unidentified room. The scene opens with the couple in bed holding and fondling each other, talking. They are both clothed, and they are covered with a blanket up to their chests. Jane kisses Nana Yaw on the side of his lips a number of times. When Nana Yaw tells Jane that he has bought a new car for her, she gets excited and rolls on top of him, and Nana Yaw begins to remove Jane's dress. Viewers might expect to see love making, but the scene cuts abruptly to a different storyline.

Another sex scene involves Jane and Seth. Jane is seated in front of the dressing mirror applying make-up, and Seth enters from behind with a parcel from Nana Yaw for Jane. They speak and begin to kiss and embrace each other as they go to lie on the bed. There are a few kisses on the bed as Jane removes Seth's tie, and the scene dissolves into a different scene.

The third sex scene happens when Chief Robertson pays Osmond to sleep with Thelma. The presentation here is quite different from the examples discussed above, because Thelma is unconscious, so she does not respond to Osmond. Osmond enters the bedroom and examines Thelma's body to make sure that she is in deep sleep. We see Osmond take off his jacket and shirt, remove his belt, and open the flap of his trousers. Then he goes under a blanket,

covering himself and Thelma except for their heads. The camera then creates an illusion of Osmond taking off the rest of his clothes. The filmmaker uses parallel shots here so the scene keeps cutting between the sex act and Chief Robertson in the kitchen, drinking. Finally we see Osmond getting on top of Thelma as the scene sharply dissolves into another scene.

These examples portray how legally difficult it is for sex to be fully represented on the screen because "everything concerning sex takes place in front of a distant camera, out of frame. The spectator is always placed in a situation of a distant camera, or out of frame. The spectator is always placed in a situation of obligational cooperation by having to undertake a hermeneutic task" (Tcheuyap 146). The viewer is constrained to read between-the-lines in order to understand the representation of the act in the visual narrative. The only part of the body revealed in *Idols of Heart* is the upper part, which often does not have sexual connotation. The lower part of the body is never seen unclothed throughout the film. The only scene in the film that reveals lower body parts is a scene in Jane's bedroom where she is seen lying on the bed with Seth. Jane is partially covered to the thighs, while Seth is wearing boxer shorts. Soon after this shot, a car horn is heard outside, and Jane announces the presence of Nana Yaw. Seth dresses quickly and runs out through the back door.

Nudity on the Ghanaian screen is considered pornography, which is often interpreted as the Westernization of the Ghanaian visual space. The censorship board insists that representations of nudity on the screen be kept to the minimum. Nii Ajen notes that issues about sexuality are encoded in euphemisms or metaphors. The coded language about sex does not mean that Ghanaians are not sexual people, but the silence came about as a result of Victorian, colonial, and Christian ideas regarding what is considered good or bad. Ajen states that the above ideologies "have had a great impact on the sense of decency of the average Ghanaian, to the extent that they scarcely discuss certain issues they consider unseemly" (130). The central theme of *Idols of Heart* revolves around sex, but the actual representation is forbidden on the screen. As Tcheuyap observes: "Sexuality means first and foremost privacy, not publicity. The body may be shared with another, but not in public; equally, the gaze is not something that can best be shared" (146).

Conclusion

Big houses with thick walls secured with iron gates, huge four wheel drives, and expensive, extra large, well-designed African traditional dresses and modern Western suits are symbols of masculinity in many Ghanaian video films. With material acquisitions, men have been able to gain access to women of their choice, yet they are unable to achieve the absolute masculine status they

very much desire. Despite their privileged positions, men constantly need to affirm and reaffirm their masculinity to themselves and to others. *Idols of Heart* takes the construction of masculinities into another dimension where wealth, influence, and affluence fail to confer masculinity on Chief Roberson. The quest for masculine validation through sex leads Nana Yaw to contract the HIV.

Conflicting messages about the virility of the penis show that when it is erect, it destroys families, abuses teenage girls, and breaks hearts, but when flaccid, it keeps families together, causing men to be faithful to their wives. Comparing the sexual practices of Chief Robertson and Nana Yaw, the former is a better husband than the latter. Is Chief Robertson faithful to his wife because he is sterile? Would he also have multiple sexual partners if he did not suffer from infertility? It is apparent that Chief Robertson's condition is a terrible situation many married men find themselves in Ghanaian society.

In the film *Dabi Dabi 1*, Boja's condition, on the other hand, seems to be the most devastating because he cannot have an erection. His situation is worse than Chief Robertson's because if the penis cannot become erect, it "has a unique ability to suggest vulnerability, fragility, a sleepy sweetness. It's not just soft. It's *really* soft. It lolls, can be gently played with, cuddled. ... Even breasts, nowadays, are likely to be harder than a soft penis" (Bordo 44). Such being the case, no man wants to be found with a flaccid penis, whether physical or symbolical. Having a penis is not enough; it must stay erect. Although the

predicaments of Chief Robertson and Boja are described as catastrophic, they are very stable husbands at home and they do not have other sexual partners besides their wives.

In contrast, Nana Yaw takes his family through untold hardships because of his sexual potency. Would his behaviour be any different if he were in Chief Robertson's or Boja's position? Although the video film establishes that Nana Yaw works in a reputable company, his life is defined by and centres on sex with multiple women. Even in the office, his sexual exploits take precedence over his duties as a manager of the company. The very thing that determines his masculinity ends up destroying him. Nana Yaw loses his sense of responsibility because of his penis, thereby denying his wife and children the intimacy of a husband and a father. It is true that "every man knows those moments when his cock rises, stands tall, and is so full of the primal mystery that it seems a natural object of worship. It has an awesome life of its own and is deserving of hymns of praise" (Keen 70).

Why is the penis exalted above other body parts? Susan Bordo states that it "may seem natural to those who equate gender with biology that the presence of a penis would confirm that the body who has it is male. But not all sexual body parts scream out their gender as definitely as the penis does" (22). The penis rules in a man's world, so a man with an inadequate penis is emasculated and feminized. Why is the penis louder than other body parts? Other thought-

provoking questions that come to mind are: Is it possible that successful men in society can find alternative means of asserting their masculinities instead of abusing young girls? Should erectile dysfunction devalue the worth of a man? Should a man's hard work come to naught because he cannot penetrate a woman or make babies? Is it possible that men with erectile dysfunction can find other means of affirming their masculinities? The answers to these questions are not straightforward. The ambivalence about the penis in Ghanaian video films reflects the ambivalence of society.

CHAPTER 4

BLOOD MASCULINITIES: MEN'S VIOLENCES IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC

> *Violence has long been understood as the best way to ensure that others recognize one's manhood publicly. [. . .] Violence is a way to prove masculinity; one is a "real" man, because one is not afraid of being violent.* (Kimmel, "Violence" 811)

Occultism in Contemporary Video Films

The two main genres that have dominated the Ghanaian video film scene are family drama and occult drama. The video films dealing with occultism or witchcraft clearly define the dichotomy of what are referred to as the physical and the metaphysical worlds, with the latter commonly referred to as the spiritual world. This demarcation is borrowed from African traditional religious beliefs, which state that although the physical world is visible to the eye, it is largely controlled by the spiritual world. Human life is therefore said to be controlled by unseen spiritual powers that play active roles in man's day to day activities (Assimeng 1981, Awendoba 2002, Gyekye 2003, Meyer 1999).

One such force in the spiritual realm is witchcraft, sometimes referred to as occultism, which is common in most African societies and other indigenous societies around the world. Witchcraft manifestations "are not the same in all societies" (Awendoba 159). What is considered witchcraft in one society may be called another name and even ascribed another functional value in another

society, depending on people's "different experiences and knowledge about the occult" (Ciekawy and Geschiere 1).

Much attention has been drawn to occult activities during the so-called post-colonial period, "precisely in modern sectors of society including politics, sports, new forms of entrepreneurship, and institutions of formal education" (Ciekawy and Geschiere 1). In line with this trend, the emergence of video film production in Ghana has seen many thematic representations that delve into the world of the supernatural. Examples of these include *Abaddon 1 & Abaddon 2: Easy Blood Money; Fatal Decision; Expectations 1 & 2; Stolen Bible 1 & 2; Mariska; Babina 1-3; Time;* and *Accra Killings.*

Ghanaian video films dealing with occult forces tend to portray individuals becoming rich through the use of demonic supernatural powers. Female involvement with the occult for money-making is a rare theme; the occult scene would seem to be dominated by men. These video films are very popular with Ghanaian audiences because they enable them to voyeuristically see the world of the occult; they satisfy their curiosity about the supernatural. In popular Ghanaian video narratives, the perpetrators of evil are prosperous; they live in big mansions with fenced walls, dress flamboyantly in the latest African and Western styles, and have a fleet of expensive cars and SUVs (BMW, Mercedes-Benz) that embody contemporary urban symbols of affluence. However, as the inevitable demise of those involved in occultism is always

portrayed as catastrophic, it serves as a caution to viewers. The methods of revealing knowledge in these video films resonate with earlier colonial patterns of film production as a form of enlightenment, and propagation of "enlightened" knowledge and ethics. Occult films normally carry a moral message that can be traced to Ghanaian storytelling (as well as to the guiding principles of the censorship board).

There are many reasons why filmmakers engage in occult discourses in these video films; for the purpose of this chapter I will discuss three. First, as the success of the films depends on audience reception, producers make deliberate efforts to develop themes that meet their audiences' expectations. Rumours of the occult are quite popular in Ghanaian societies, and the multiplicity of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches has increased the popularity of stories about witchcraft and occultism. Meyer suggests that:

> Because of [. . .] closeness to audience expectations, videofilm makers can safely be regarded as mediators of popular views. Fixing and visualizing rumours, videofilms refashion stories circulating in society by adopting a particular narrative form. Therefore the videofilm industry is a fascinating site for cultural analysis. (*Prayer & Guns*)

Occult video films commonly generate lively debates among viewers. Power and money are usually strong accompanying themes, the implication being that while many individuals are confronted with temptations, some actually achieve

wealth and power by succumbing to the powers of darkness. Camaroff and Camaroff identify two dimensions of occultism as

> a material aspect founded on the effort to conjure wealth—or to account for its accumulations—by appeal to techniques that defy explanations in the conventional terms of practical season; and an ethical aspect grounded in the moral discourses and (re)actions sparked by the (real or imagined) production of value through such "magical" means. (310)

Occult video films serve to provide explanations for people's sudden and unexpected riches, resulting out of unknown and unseen enterprises. Though occult films are popular, filmmakers do not really endorse the practice of occultism for any venture, whether good or evil. Main characters who achieve affluence are inevitably shown to fall from grace. There is also always some form of divine intervention shown at the end - often a pastor, usually of Pentecostal-charismatic affiliation, destroys the work of the devil through prayer and compels the person involved with the occult to confess his or her dark dealings with the devil. Thus, these video films become propagators of Pentecostal-charismatic dogma: wealth achieved through evil means is vain and destroys the body, soul, and spirit of the involved individual(s). This preaching encourages people to wait patiently on the Lord for true riches that never fade. The video films teach that "modern life as such is dangerous and ambivalent and that there is need for Pentecostal religion in order to guide a person in engaging with modernity in a disciplined way" (Meyer, "Power & Guns").

Due to the popularity of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in the country, preachers in many churches have become well admired (Gifford 1994, Meyer 1999, 1998, Van Dijk 1997). Pentecostal-Charismatic popular culture competes with traditional religion for followers. The ability to reveal supernatural knowledge is a major focus for both religions; Pentecostal-Charismatic preachers and witch doctors seek to "reveal" the inner workings of supernatural forces in order to attract huge followings. Since the emergence of video film culture in the country, "the camera, too, takes part in this competition and the visualization of occult forces," and the "capacity to reveal what is going on in the realm of the spiritual and how it affects a person's life is a source of power" (Meyer "Ghanaian Popular Cinema", 211). Traditional priests and Pentecostal-Charismatic pastors are continually engaged in confrontations with one another over supernatural issues, fighting over who has more power in the spiritual realm.

Occultism is not an attempt to return to traditional African religion; it is a means by which traditional practices are recreated and remoulded to make them more appealing in a contemporary capitalist society. Comaroff and Comaroff describe the situation:

> Appeals to the occult in pursuit of the secrets of capital generally rely on local cultural technologies: on vernacular modes of divination or oracular consultation, spirit possession on ancestral invocation, sorcery bursting or forensic legal procedures, witch beliefs or prayer. But the use of these technologies does not imply an iteration of a retreat into

> "tradition". On the contrary, their deployment in such circumstances is frequently a means of fashioning new techniques to preserve older values by retooling culturally familiar signs and practices. (317)

Occult rituals in the video films might therefore be regarded as an amalgamation of traditional African religious and Charismatic Christian practices.

A second reason for filmmakers' engagement in occult discourses can be deduced from a commentary on truth in oral history - Luise White notes that people do not always necessarily attempt to accurately recount what they saw, but tend to repeat stories that help to support their ideas. She adds that even though experience is considered vital, people do not always speak from experience but often rely on circulated stories. This is not to say that people intentionally promote falsehoods:

> The distinction between true and false stories may be an important one for historians, but for people engaged in contentious arguments, explanations, and descriptions, sometimes presenting themselves as experts, or just in the best possible light, it may not matter: people want to tell stories that work, stories that convey ideas and points. (White 30)

Occult themes in video films might be regarded simply as the way people talk about current societal issues, in order to encourage debate and open discussions. The video films become a platform from which issues that concern the daily lives of the people are addressed. Whether stories of the occult are true or false is not the concern of the filmmakers; these stories attract the

people, and thereby profit. As the producers are not necessarily involved in the presentation of historical facts and data, narrative accuracy is of little concern.

Finally, some producers specialize in video films that depict the traditional cultural practices (and widely-spread rumours) of the lucrative black-market for human tissues and organs. These films portray the ritual murders and sale of human organs motivated by the rules of supply and demand that govern this underground dark economy. Nancy Scheper-Hughes notes that the lag in organ transplant technologies in places like China, Taiwan, India, Argentina, Chile, and Brazil has created a scarcity of important organs, causing sick people to travel the globe seeking proper medical attention. She comments that "markets are by nature indiscriminate and inclined to reduce everything—including human beings, their labour, and their reproductive capacity—to the status of commodities" (193). Global trafficking in human organs is illustrated in the film *Girl at 18 (1-3)*, in which a businessman Black Jaguar and his associates Black Mamba and Maputo buy human beings, kill them, and sell their body parts to international partners represented by their colleague Polo, who lives in Europe. The inclusion of Polo in the ring helps to illustrate the global nature of the crime. Polo represents a human organ syndicate in Europe that profits hugely from the sale of human parts and blood. Scheper-Hughes reports in her article that "the flow of organs follows the modern routes of capital: from South to North, from Third to First World, from

poor to rich, from black and brown to white, and from female to male" (193). Occult video films are therefore actively engaged in speaking to global issues, as well as to local.

Despite the negative, symbolic, or metaphoric meanings that might be read into occult practices, occultism is in fact part of Ghanaians' everyday life, and issues concerning occultism feature prominently in the larger Ghanaian media. As Comaroff and Comaroff emphasize "occult economies are not reducible to the symbolic, the figurative, or the allegorical. Magic is, everywhere, the science of the concrete, aimed at making sense of and acting upon the world" (318). Ciekawy and Geschiere also point out that "rumours about the occult are not only told for amusement or intellectual curiosity" (3). They note that, increasingly, witchcraft activities are an ongoing part of individuals' lives. To complicate matters, stories of the occult increase general curiosity about the subject, and actually lead to engagement in occultism in an effort to become wealthy. The "new witchcraft rumours [. . .] express both the fear of and the obsession with, new opportunities for accumulating wealth and power" (Ciekawy & Geschiere 6).

Witchcraft and occultism stories have featured prominently in the Ghanaian media, especially from the late 1990s to the present. Since 1997, there have been mysterious murders of women around the Accra Metropolitan area. These women were killed under strange circumstances, and supposedly for

ritual purposes (Quist-Arcton, Archer). The media also reported of politicians' alleged involvement in occult practices in order to win the December 2004 elections (Akosah-Sarpong). Additionally, "the Headmaster of Mfantsipim School confirmed rumours that some students from second cycle institutions in the country are engaged in occultism. He said the practice had assumed high dimensions and needed to be checked before it got out of hand" (GNA). These examples confirm that occultism is indeed a widespread aspect of Ghanaian society. The video films that deal with occultism are actively involved in reiterating popular news items and rumours. Meyer cautions that whereas "it has to be kept in mind that films neither directly mirror ordinary people's views and experiences, nor immediately reflect the phenomena they portray, it is important to avoid the pitfall of approaching them as mere fictions opposed to a reality out there" (*Prayer & Guns*). As stories of witchcraft and occultism actually feature prominently in traditional stories and religious practices, video films are perhaps simply engaged in retelling these stories.

The use of occultism to acquire wealth has become a survival strategy for young men in the city who are faced with the challenge of unemployment. It is used to sustain power interactions among leaders and the rich in society - occultism is no longer a phenomenon of the village poor. *Stolen Bible 1 & 2* demonstrate that rich and respected people in the cities are secretly engaging in occultism. Comaroff and Comaroff also draw attention to the fact that occultism

is not only an African phenomenon - similar practices have been catalogued as occurring in many parts of the world, including Asia, North America, and Europe. In a sense, it is a selective global phenomenon in the quest for the accumulation of wealth. Ghanaian video films reflect this, and generally show the acquisition of wealth as the main purpose for seeking occult powers. The importance of including these themes in the films is that occult-related wealth is normally achieved through violence against women and children, as it generally requires ritual killings and the sale of human body parts.

Men and Women Involved in Occultism

One distinct pattern that runs through many Ghanaian video films is the gender play in occultism and witchcraft. The films show how men become involved in secret societies in order to acquire wealth or political power, while women practice witchcraft or occultism in order to win the love of men. Video films are thereby actively involved in reproducing and reinforcing traditional gender roles in society. "Gender arrangements," Connell observes, "are reproduced socially (not biologically) by power structures to constrain individual action so they often appear unchanging" (*Gender*, 10). The "winning over" of women after a man becomes rich is a prominent theme in the video films. The films depict male superiority, and promote the idea that a woman may be "acquired" by a man, provided he has enough power and influence. In

Stolen Bible 1 & 2, Ken is reluctant to sacrifice his wife for money, but his close friends encourage him to do so, as he would be able to marry another wife anytime he wished, once he became wealthy. This type of occultish theme serves to reinforce the extreme traditional positions of both sexes. Women are positioned in the domestic space, while men belong in the corporate capitalist world. The obvious subtext of these themes is that men are to aim to achieve sufficient wealth to give them dominance over both women and other men, while women are to pursue heterosexual love with successful men. The women featured in these roles are shown as desperate, employing any means necessary to win a man's love. As Beauvoir puts it, "man cannot think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without a man" (xxii).

The video film *Time* clearly exhibits men's involvement in occultism and exposes how violence becomes part of masculine culture in the process of wealth acquisition. *Time* is quite different from other films that deal with occultism, in that it plainly exposes the varieties of violent means by which men often acquire wealth and displays extreme violence perpetrated by men.

Time

Francis is a successful banker occupying a managerial position. He is married to Agatha and they have two children, Fred and Sarafina. Peterson, Francis' brother-in-law, approaches Francis one evening and complains about his

business and how things are not going on well for him. Peterson tells Francis that he has some potentially profitable ideas, but needs a loan to implement them. When Francis assures Peterson that getting a loan from the bank is not a difficult task if he has collateral, Peterson admits that collateral will be a problem, and pleads with Francis to use his position at the bank to help him secure the loan. After much deliberation, Francis agrees to help Peterson get the loan without collateral.

In time, Peterson fails to make payments. Consequently, the scheme is exposed; Francis loses his job, and is actually sent to jail. Despite the turmoil that he has caused his sister's family, Peterson still refuses to pay the money. Francis' car and house are sold in order for him to make bail. Peterson unscrupulously sends his friend Alhaji to buy Francis' house and car at a very cheap price. After being released from prison, Francis is forced to move with his family to the village. They begin to farm in the village but, unable to bear the humiliation of his new life any longer, Francis plans to commit suicide by hanging himself.

In a strange turn of events, a hunter dressed as a traditional priest appears from nowhere and speaks with Francis, offering to help him. The hunter orders Francis to follow him to a shrine, where he gives Francis a pot and tells him to break it at the outskirts of the village. Breaking the pot, he informs Francis, will cause Agatha to become ill, and the sicker she gets the

richer Francis will become. Francis attempts to resist this temptation but upon the hunter's insistence he breaks the pot. As promised, Agatha becomes sick and Francis' wealth strangely begins to return. The family moves back to the city, and after some time Agatha dies. Francis hides her corpse in a closet in a room in his house, and, in an overtly symbolic cinematic twist, the body continually vomits money. Francis introduces his childhood friend Amos to the shrine and, after killing a pregnant woman and using her unborn baby in an occult ritual, Amos too becomes rich overnight.

Of course, this ill-gotten wealth cannot last. Francis' son Fred becomes inquisitive as to why his father insists on keeping the door of the room containing Agatha's corpse closed. Alone in the house one day, Fred enters the secret room and discovers his father's horrible action, and his diabolical means of making money. Francis catches his son mid-investigation and kills him in a rage. While attempting to dispose of the body, he meets Peterson, who shoots and kills him. Amos, in turn, avenges Francis' death by killing Peterson and his family. Francis' daughter Sarafina eventually moves in with Amos and his family; Amos pledges to care of her as his own daughter. However, as he too strives for wealth through the occult, he is one day challenged to sacrifice a virgin girl. He sends Sarafina to a shrine for sacrifice, but when the girl mentions the name of Jesus, Holy Ghost fire consumes the shrine and she is set free.

Exploring Men's Violences

The rest of this chapter explores the violences perpetrated in *Time* through Michael Kaufman's theory of the triad of men's violences. Extending this triad, the chapter will also examine men's violence against young people. According to Kaufman's theory, the multiplicity of men's violences comes as a result of the fragility and instability of masculinity itself; men must continually search for new ways to assert it, lest they feel like less of a "man". Historically, men have nearly always been positioned in environments that encourage violence (Chodorow 2002, Kaufman 2001). Kaufman focuses his discussion on "men's violences", which refer to gender, rather than "male violence", which makes only a biological distinction (5). Jeff Hearn also finds the term "men's violences" more appropriate because it attributes violence specifically to men, without implicating biological causes. Additionally, the term removes any ambiguity that might allow violence to be attributed to being "male", which forms only a fraction of the totality of men's violence. Finally, the term acknowledges the plurality of men's violences (4).

Men's violences, Kaufman observes, are institutionalized in social, political, and economic life. As these dimensions of violence feed on one another, it is impossible to discuss one apart from the others. Indeed, as men are in large part socially-determined creatures, many men resort to violence as a

social means of creating and maintaining their masculine identities. Kimmel and Aronson note:

> Men are not born—growing from infants through boyhood to manhood—to follow a predetermined biological imperative encoded in their physical organization. To be a man is to participate in social life as a man, as a gendered being. Men are not born; they are made. And men make themselves, actively constructing their masculinities within a social and historical context. (xxiii)

Biology alone cannot bestow masculinity on a man; he must follow the dictates of society and construct himself as a man. All of the major male characters in *Time* - Francis, Peterson, Alhaji, and Amos - appear to be grappling with the construction of their masculinities, and in the process resort to violence. The establishment of a masculine identity has become rooted in a specific social framework, one that includes the ownership of wealth as an integral part of masculinity. Within such a framework women become, to these male characters, commodities to be used in the exchange of wealth.

Violence against Women

Kaufman observes that "for every apparently individual act of violence there is a social context" (5). *Time*'s plot introduces the viewer to multiple forms of violence against women, the causes of which are intractably interwoven with those of the violence between men. Indeed, as the film demonstrates, men's battles with one another often have female casualties. For instance, Agatha's

character is symbolic of the often silenced voice of women who become commodities in men's quests for masculinity.

As the credits roll, the camera leads us into a board meeting in progress; shuffling among close-up, medium, and long shots, the camera sets the tone of presenting a visual reformulation of male dominance in the video film. The movement of the camera at framing and retelling of this story rooted in occultism foreshows how the occurrences at the work place are directly interwoven with the domestic space. The mise-en-scène together with the reaction shots from the board members indicate the secret male rivalry among them and also establish Francis' powerlessness among his colleagues. Francis is accused of approving a loan to Mr. Peterson Ansah without collateral; in an attempt to defend himself, Francis' vulnerability to the opinions of the other men is quite evident. Indeed, a tight frame is used to depict Francis' weakness here, a symbol of constriction. At first he blames the accountant – it must have been an accounting oversight, as he, a professional banker, would never do such a thing. He relies on his sense of masculinity and endeavours to build it up; he asserts his status as a professional, as a "competent man," as though this should be enough to direct the attention away from himself. Of course, the accountant is also a professional, and a "competent man," and is quick to defend his own masculine status by reminding the group of this. Had it not been for the timely intervention of a moderator, the argument might have

developed into a physical altercation. The board members ultimately reach the consensus that Francis is at fault and must repay the loan himself or face legal consequences. Francis is defeated; he shamefully admits his fault and promises to pay the money. His powerlessness before his colleagues is obvious.

The camera takes us into Francis' living room in the next scene where he is hurriedly packing his things together with the family to escape. Contrary to the tight frame Francis is positioned in the previous scene, he is moving in a bigger setting in his house and the actions in the present scene obviously indicate that he is in charge of the family. As the sole economic provider and self-declared head of the household, he exercises his authority by commanding his wife and children to pack their belongings and follow him, not allowing for any family consultation on the matter. Luxton explains that "as the wage *earner*, the man is the wage *owner*. He is the property owner in the family; his power is rooted in real property relations" (65). Francis' dominion over his family clearly has its foundation in his role as financial provider; his actions seem to indicate that he is not otherwise worthy of the authority that he bears. His dominance is short-lived as the scene quickly moves to the first exterior scenes of the film. The scene itself is symbolic in revealing the reality of Francis' situation to the family as the family watches him taken away in a slow motion. Agatha quickly comes in to plead with the police officers who arrive to take Francis away but her plea is dismissed without consideration. Eventually, of course, Francis is

apprehended and placed in police custody. Through a flashback, Francis describes his predicament to his pastor while in police custody.

Francis and Agatha's relationship takes a downward turn when Peterson refuses to repay his loan. As Peterson is her brother, Francis pressures Agatha to convince him to repay the debt. Agatha complies, and suffers significant mental trauma as she chases her brother from place to place, harassing him and pleading that he pay back the loan. Agatha becomes a tool that the men use to influence each other; she is caught in a war of competing masculinities. Although there were several obvious methods with which Francis might have persuaded Peterson to repay the loan, he used none of these. He made no attempt to confront Peterson directly, and did not report the default to the police. Francis' hesitation to take either of these approaches might well be explained by his fear of appearing less masculine - his brother-in-law might become angry, and Francis would want to avoid such a confrontation; reporting the case to the police might also be interpreted as a weak move. Somehow, though, when Francis talks of the matter with Agatha, he does his best to present himself as a "man of action," ready to take whatever steps are necessary to resolve the issue (again, a preservation of the masculine image).

Francis' tension from this situation is hidden at work, but released openly at home. The family "becomes the place where the violence suffered by individuals in their work place is discharged" (Kaufman 8). In this case, the

pain of Francis' powerlessness at work is transferred directly to his wife. He speaks harshly and condescendingly to Agatha, in much the same way that his colleagues addressed him. Agatha suffers a double agony, as her elder brother is the reason for her husband's agitation, a fact that Francis does not let her forget. Agatha is left with no recourse but to apologize and reassure her husband that everything will be alright. Surely, the home is "one of the only places where men feel safe enough to express emotions. As the dams break, the flood pours on the women and children" (Kaufman 8).

In an effort to preserve male pride, Francis and Peterson force Agatha to act as an intermediary between them. Though masculinity is associated with aggressiveness, this aggression is sometimes misdirected (often at women) in an effort to shield a fragile sense of masculinity from harm. In *Time*, while Francis' position as a banker certainly does not permit him to be physically violent at work, he manages to exert his masculinity by calmly telling his colleagues (all men, of course, except the secretary) that he will come up with the money himself, before the auditors' reports are presented at headquarters. His frustration must be vented at some point, though, and so private disputes with Agatha become the mechanism for this release. Somehow, Francis is still able to feel that his sense of masculinity can be maintained at home since "at work men are powerless, so in their leisure time they want to have a feeling that they control their own lives. Because they are responsible for the household's

subsistence, men often feel that they have the right to control the arrangements of the household and the people who live there" (Luxton 65).

The opening scenes of the flashback show Francis demonstrating wonderful qualities of a nurturing husband and father. He is portrayed as being very loving; the family is clearly his major priority. The movement of the camera makes this narrative control visually perceptible; the camera advances from a happy family at dinner table– where Francis happily commends his wife for cooking a delicious meal– to the entrance of Peterson. The knock at the door followed by the entrance of Peterson foreshadows the disaster that follows every appearance he makes. Five months after, the same setting is used to visually capture the other side of Francis as a result of his encounter with Peterson. Francis' attitude changes as the crises become overwhelming; his outlook and demeanour are polarized, and at times he becomes violent. Hearn notes that such violence may be described as "occasional, infrequent, 'one-offs'; as a response to 'the relationship' or a reaction to alleged provocation..." (81). Francis' violence was therefore misdirected - any exhibition of violence at work (or with Peterson, for that matter) would likely have been contested with violence; a loss in such a contest would mean the loss of his masculinity. At home, this is an unlikely risk, and so Agatha becomes a "safe" outlet for Francis' fear and agitation as he spouts verbal abuse at her for her brother's actions.

Meanwhile, Peterson also manages to avoid Francis by claiming that there would be no point in meeting with him unless he had the money. Shuffling between different scenes that show Francis struggling to find solution to the impending problem, we see Peterson at the other side of town on a golf course. The scene opens with a golf ball rolling towards a hole; the camera then moves from behind Peterson's back as he hits the ball again. The focus on the ball and his back turned to the camera indicate the frivolity of the occasion and how he is enjoying life as a result of duping Francis. The progression of the scene further heightens Peterson's international connections and wealth. His British business associates had traced him to the golf course to pay him a huge sum of money. Soon after collecting amidst joy and laughter, Agatha walks onto the course looking distraught, on the verge of tears. When she demands to know when Peterson will repay her husband, he tells her a lie and sends her home. Only Peterson and the inferred audience for the film are witness to the truth of the matter. Peterson and Agatha exit the scene in opposite direction with the former excited and the latter at the verge of nervous break down. The scene dissolves into Francis' living room where the melancholy looking Francis informs Agatha that he has been fired from his job.

As discussed earlier, the many dimensions of masculinity are often tightly intertwined. The threat of job loss and legal action against Francis is also a threat to those aspects of his masculinity that have their roots in his role as the

family breadwinner. Unemployment surely ruins the status and self respect of many men. Returning to the present, the camera takes us back to where we left off as Francis tells his pastor that all of his life has been devoted to work and dreams that, by this one set of circumstances, seem to have been shattered. Francis, this time looking quite unkempt, is again positioned in a tight frame while in police custody - constricted, powerless, emasculated. His body language and pattern of speech both indicate a loss of hope; all of that which had previously defined him as a man has been taken away confirming Brittan's assertion that "unemployed men see themselves as powerless and trivialised. The breadwinner's role (in theory) gives men a sense of identity of structural location. For most men in capitalist societies, their skilled and unskilled jobs are the prime focus of identity. Without work, they are rootless and disjointed" (189). Francis is justified in fearing for his masculine status, as the greatest portion of this is indeed derived from his role as breadwinner. Part of this fear is that he will lose the base from which he is justified in demanding respect from his wife and children, and thereby his position of relative authority in the home. Beyond this, he is also at risk of losing the sense of personal "success" that has become a large part of his masculinity:

> For many men, employment provides the interrelated economic resources and symbolic benefits of wages/salaries, skills and experience, career progress of power, authority and high discretion. Typically, it seems men's gender identities are constructed, compared and evaluated

> by self and others according to a whole variety of criteria indicating personal 'success' in the work place. (Collison and Hearn 62-63)

As though her situation were not difficult enough, Francis' absence leaves Agatha to care for their two children alone, while attempting to raise money to bail her husband out of prison. At the same time, she suffers various degrees of emotional and verbal abuse from her brother. Sadly, her survival at this point is still dependant on men - her pastor provides her with emotional and spiritual support while she plans to sell the family property to raise bail. Meanwhile, her brother actually conspires with his friend Alhaji to rob her. Peterson's intent is not to harm Agatha directly, but to further emasculate his brother-in-law. Agatha is again placed at the centre of their attempts to attack the other's sense of masculinity, and bolster their own. Stoltenberg suggests that "whatever 'men' do to 'women' is intrinsically related to what 'men' do to 'men' and vice versa; it forges a tangible and verifiable structural link" (XXIII). Agatha's well-being is not of concern to these men; she is not the main focus of their masculine adventure.

Released from police custody, Francis faces the greatest humiliation of his life in moving with his family to the village. He hates the sight of his wife and children working on the farm. His inability to provide for them reduces his sense of masculinity, and thereby his overall sense of self-worth. This emotional state substantiates Brittan's observation that because "most men have been

brought up to see themselves as being responsible for the bread and butter of daily existence, they find it almost impossible to accommodate themselves to the sight of their wives going out to work to put food on the table" (189). While it may be argued that Francis loves his wife and therefore cannot see her struggling in the scorching sun to help feed the family, Brittan's observation underscores the subordinate position society places women—always at the receiving end. Agatha's contribution will eventually change the power dynamics of the family. This is true for Francis, so much so that he prepares to commit suicide in order to escape further humiliation. This decision comes after much contemplation; his musings are depicted for the viewer by way of several soliloquies. In one, he seems to conclude that "a job is the ticket for membership of life; work is all [he has], to prove [he exists]" (Ingham 28). Indeed, before being fired, Francis is shown to be fully absorbed in his work, and his very existence is marked by his job. "So now with unemployment, [he becomes] 'un' anything" (Ingham 27). Work, "specifically waged work, is a dominant feature of twenty-first century conceptions of masculinity. The loss of opportunities to enact that aspect of masculinity and the changes in the nature of work has had far-reaching effects on men of all social classes" (Rushing 385). To men like Francis, being engaged in a successful occupation translates into power, dominance, and control, all markers of his perceived supremacy and masculine identity. Since it is overwhelmingly agreed upon that masculine

identity is an enactment rather than a biological acquisition (Connell 1995, Kimmel and Messner 2001, Kimmel and Aronson 2004, Rushing 2004), men continuously embark on the journey to find means with which to assert their masculinities. Though the gender binary may often privilege men over women, men seem to be the most afraid of the validity of their position in the public eye. Concluding that his situation is beyond what he can bear, Francis is seen on a path to the forest with a rope around his neck.

The camera follows him to the spot where he plans to hang himself but a mysterious hunter saves him and promises to help Francis solve his financial problems. The man orders Francis to follow him to a cave. Through a series of shots in fast motion with shrill sound effects the hunter appears and disappears and he is seen transformed at the entrance of the cave. His ability to appear and disappear mesmerizes Francis but at the same time, it gives him hope for a supernatural intervention. However, Francis' hopes are shattered when the hunter asks him to sacrifice his wife by breaking a pot at the edge of the forest. The priest's suggestion is characteristic of the social construction of women as both vulnerable and expendable figures. Agatha is portrayed as the proverbial sacrificial lamb that must suffer, and eventually die, for the rest of the family. Francis runs from the shrine because he does not want to sacrifice his wife, but somehow this sentiment makes him feel like less of a man. Again using fast motion shots the pot appears and disappears before Francis as he runs along.

These shots in the forest position Francis in tight frames - he is restricted, particularly in his ability to take some sort of effective action. Although he believes that he loves his wife, he is more afraid of the consequences of his continued emasculation. This part of the film seems to suggest that it is often necessary for women to suffer, in order for men to attain their masculinity. Francis' emotions regarding his quest for manhood are evidently stronger than his love for his wife; he breaks the pot and returns home. The events that unfold from this point call into question Francis' integrity and commitment to his family. He shows no remorse when Agatha becomes sick while he becomes wealthy. Even before the money begins to come, he delights in moving from the village back to the city, anticipating the "good life". Francis' transformation is dramatic - he quickly ceases to be the nurturing man of his family, hardly worrying at all about his wife's deteriorating condition (with his newfound wealth, he can marry another woman with ease). Agatha, therefore, becomes disposable, a commodity to be thrown away after its useful life. The movement of the camera and the use of special effects enable the camera to re-tell this story rooted in occultism by creating the illusion of the supernatural.

Before the unfortunate incidents that cause Francis to lose his job, he shows no signs of violence toward his family. However, from the moment he breaks the pot in the forest until the moment Agatha dies, Francis' actions indicate that the threat of emasculation can be stronger than a sense of love for

one's family, and can indeed incite men to violence. Hearn in his discussion of the structural conditions of violence points to the fact that conditions that precipitate violence do not simply exist for the purpose of analysis only but they happen in the individual lives within structures. Issues regarding employment and unemployment in a capitalist environment "might affect the gendered expectations and experiences of men and women, so that when men formerly defined as 'breadwinners' become unemployed and identified as redundant they may reassert their selves through violence" (Hearn 207). It is rather unfortunate Francis allows his unemployment situation to take a better part of him. Once the pot is broken, he does an excellent job of pretending that all is well, and immediately begins to enjoy his wealth at the expense of his wife's health. Williams notes that violence in the family "complicates survival and recovery because there may be no 'safe haven', no place where the woman or the child can feel safe and secure from another attack. In addition to lack of safety, there are many other implications for child and adult victims who live with their attackers" (445). Francis knows the cause of his wife's illness, but plays the role of the concerned husband, asking her of the reports she has received from the doctor. When the family moves back to the city, Francis is no longer the loving and caring husband he once was. In fact, he begins to give more thought to his wife's death than to her recovery. So long as Francis feels

the need to defend his wealth, his wife and children are put at risk simply by living with him.

Despite his wife's condition, Francis begins to dress in the latest designer suits and drives the latest four-wheel-drive vehicles. He visits his friend Amos, proudly displaying the symbols of his new wealth. Francis introduces Amos to the shrine, suggesting that Amos may be able to achieve similar wealth through similar action. When a priest suggests that Amos kill a pregnant woman and spill the blood of her unborn baby, he complies. In order to execute his diabolical plan without suspicion, Amos pretends to be mad as doing so gives him the opportunity to monitor the movements of a pregnant woman who sells cooked food in the vicinity. Thematically, one of the conspicuous characteristics of the film is how men do not consider the consequences of their actions when their masculinity is at stake. Through a number of dramatic shots, which culminate in the grotesque killing of the pregnant woman and other killing scenes later in the film, *Time* seems to draw attention to itself as a video film about image making and blatant brutality. Incorporating these themes and the style of presentation makes the film gripping and suspenseful.

The scene in which Amos commits this ritual murder is the most horrendous and violent in the film. The episode, involving a series of shots, begins when the pregnant woman closes from work one night. The camera follows her on her way home. Amos, still pretending to be mad sits under a tree

on the woman's path to home. The woman comes face to face with Amos but since he does not pose a threat she is comfortable. The camera shifts from the face to face encounter and follows the woman with Amos closely behind. With the little opportunity at hand, Amos strikes her from behind. The camera angles and the subject positions within the frame resonate with how each male character is actively involved in stubbing others from behind. The symbolism of the shots is heightened by the dark night and naivety of the woman about the dangers of the night. The scene also seems to reiterate the unfortunate incident of the disappearance of women in the Accra metropolis as discussed above. The episode continues with Amos putting the woman in his car trunk, drives her to unknown place, and using the crudest means ever, cuts the woman open, and removes the baby from her womb with blood gushing out on him. The scene literally tells that masculinity sometimes demands a blood bath before it could be attained. Amos' willingness to commit this act is the result of an inability to exercise authority over his wife and children, as he has limited income and cannot perform his role as the breadwinner adequately. Man's "sense of masculinity is based on feelings of power and control. When that is lost or when that cannot or does not exist for whatever systemic reason, then violence is the result, and it is women and children who bear the disproportionate brunt of this violence" (J.C. Brown 5). Seeing Francis' wealth, Amos begins to believe that being a newspaper vendor is a disgrace to his masculinity. As soon as he

becomes rich, the petty quarrels between himself and his wife cease immediately; he gains her respect, and his authority at home is unchallenged.

As men such as Francis and Amos gain wealth, however, they also become more vigilant, more prepared to defend this wealth from other men. As a result, other men who might otherwise have been friends are now perceived as enemies, threats to their status. This masculine uncertainty often leads men to commit terrible hostilities against their fellow men.

Violence against Other Men

Men's violence against other men is rampant in every society (Kaufman 2001, Kimmel 2004, Spierenburg 1998), and it is demonstrated through a number of violent acts including fights, rape in prisons, gay bashing, racism and other aggressive expressions. Certain types of sports and entertainment involve violence. Other forms of violence may at first seem non-violent, but are in fact quite harmful. Kaufman identifies some of the most subtle forms as "the verbal put downs or, combined with economic and other factors, the competition in the business, political, or academic world" (9). Men's violence against other men in *Time* is generally shown to occur because men are unable to accept that multiple hegemonic masculinities might exist simultaneously in the same society. In order to one-up one another, these men display multiple forms of violence, ranging from subtle verbal putdowns to physical assaults and murder.

Hearn explains that "men's violence to men is often related to age, economic class and locality; while men's violence to women is often related to gender and sexuality" (207).

Time presents a male-dominated society in which certain men top the hierarchy, above women, children, and other men. In many instances, violence is used to protect and maintain this hierarchical order. The demands of patriarchy and social order cause biological males to internalize emotion, often causing them to seek violent solutions to their problems. The hunter and hero ideologies are strongly entrenched in patriarchal societies; this is particularly evident in capitalist societies where business dealings for the acquisition of wealth are prominent. Those who make it to the top (i.e., become the most wealthy) are considered superior to those who do not; there is little balance – the winner takes the grand prize, while the loser goes home empty-handed, feminized. In Brittan's words, "the fact that men compete with each other at all sorts of levels is the means whereby society guarantees that the successful occupy positions of power, the unsuccessful being left with the hard work" (78).

Peterson's carefully laid plans against Francis are a reaction to his continuous success, somehow seen to highlight Peterson's own incompetence, and his subordinate masculine position in society. As hegemonic masculinity, as Suzanne Hatty notes, "is the publicly avowed, preferred model of manliness" (117), Peterson embarks upon a quest to destabilize his brother-in-

law's position in the hierarchy. He attempts to become the sole dominant masculine figure by destroying any man he sees as a threat or close competitor. Peterson's response to Francis' plight makes it clear that he intended, from the beginning, to rob his brother-in-law. He cunningly used his family ties to persuade Francis to offer the loan without collateral. Unlike the days of old, when men would compete for game or sexual rewards, the men featured in *Time* compete with one another for power and domination.

When Francis is in police custody and Agatha must bail him out, she approaches Peterson for the money. Peterson refuses and suggests that Francis' car and house should be sold to raise the funds. The scene where Peterson makes this suggestion takes place in his house. The scene opens with a series of shots that show an aerial view of the home, focusing particularly on the beautiful architecture and the multitude of cars parked on the property. The scene cuts into the living room where Peterson and his wife are together with Agatha and her pastor. The beauty of the living room and Peterson's elegant appearance further confirm his affluence. Despite the extravagance of the environment and the pomposity of Peterson's appearance, he claims not to have the money required to make Francis' bail. Peterson is keenly aware of the vital role that houses and cars play in masculine identity formation, (the camera emphasizes that by focusing on the elegance of the houses of all the main male characters in the video film) and uses this opportunity to dispossess Francis.

After suggesting that Francis' house and car be sold, he sends his colleague Alhaji to buy the home, an act fully symbolic of Peterson's outright purchase of Francis' masculinity.

In yet another act of deception in the film, Alhaji buys the house, but retains the original deed for himself, presenting Peterson with a falsified document. When Peterson realizes that he has been duped, he confronts Alhaji, who replies that evil begets evil. Alhaji apparently feels justified in fooling Peterson, as Peterson acted similarly toward Francis, making Peterson an evil man. Though Alhaji and Peterson were once close friends, their individual quests for supreme masculinity drove them apart. The definition of masculinity, to such men, appears to mean "[being] in control at all times. But remaining in control prevents a person from ever achieving intimacy with another, from ever letting down his guard; it thus precludes easy friendship, fellowship, community" (French 530). Peterson confronts Alhaji again at a later date, this time accompanied by three armed guards, and with their presence is able to retrieve the original documents for the house. This is analogous to the retrieval of his lost manhood – "if manhood is about power and control, not being powerful means you are not a man. Again, violence becomes a means to prove otherwise to yourself and others" (Kaufman *7 Ps*). Peterson's aim is accomplished only after shooting Alhaji's wife, and chasing Alhaji himself in an attempt to kill him. At one point during the chase one of the guards gains

ground on Alhaji and is about to kill him, when Peterson waves him off. Peterson believes that his masculinity will only be redeemed if Alhaji dies by his hand directly, which he does. The camera helps in emphasizing the symbolic fall of Alhaji; an aerial shot is used to project the fall from the sky to the ground. Once he lands on the ground as a result of a blow received from one of Peterson's bodyguards, Peterson walks on him and kills him. Alhaji's fall and death are displayed in slow motion signifying the futility of seeking masculinity through deception. The slow motion exaggerates the incident and presents it larger than life. Still in slow motion, the camera follows Peterson as he leaves the scene with a majestic walk and display of victory for killing his close competitor. However, it is just a matter of time because just as the slow motion is short-lived, the same way Peterson's end comes.

Despite his success in strategically achieving new wealth, Peterson's construction of his hegemonic masculinity is incomplete. He displays his masculine status, such as it is, with fleets of cars, large houses, and expensive clothing. He makes himself out to be strong, in charge, a figure to be feared. At one point he tells Francis that "the fear of me is the beginning of wisdom." When Peterson's wife complains about his injustices against Agatha and Francis, alluding that they are likely to seek vengeance, he tells her that Francis and his family are like grains on his palm - he can blow them off whenever he pleases.

Peterson's hegemonic masculinity, however, is missing one important component: validation from other men. Neither Alhaji nor Francis respects him, or regards him as superior. Without the endorsement of his two equally successful counterparts, Peterson remains insecure about his masculinity. Meuser states that "homosocial settings are of crucial importance for founding and maintaining a masculine identity" (296). Kimmel also confirms that masculinity "is a homosocial enactment" ("Masculinity as Homophobia", 275). Perhaps in response to the resultant insecurity, Peterson surrounds himself with what he perceives to be subordinate masculine figures - bodyguards, drivers, casual labourers. His masculine status is acknowledged by these men, but their social status prevents this from being entirely satisfying. Similarly, the positive attention that he receives from the women around him does not fulfil his need for approval, as he requires it most from those he understands to be "on his level." As with all of the principal male characters in *Time*, Peterson equates masculinity with material wealth and the ability to control other men (the "hegemonic definition of manhood is a man in power, man with power, and a man of power") (Kimmel "Masculinity as Homophobia", 272). This view, of course, simply leads to a societal reinforcement of the ideology that real men are the ones with power over women and other men. Ironically, this understanding of masculinity is perpetrated most strongly by men themselves: "We are under constant careful scrutiny of other men. Other men watch us,

rank us, grant our acceptance into the realm of manhood. Manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval. It is other men who evaluate the performance" (Kimmel, "Masculinity and Homophobia", 275). Men who score low on this performance sometimes resort to acts of violence as a means of making up for their inadequacies. Peterson is a fair example of this – he fails to recognize that Francis and Alhaji know that he is simply posturing, pretending to be powerful. Peterson's violence in the film escalates particularly after realizing his failure in his performance for Alhaji and Francis.

During a confrontation between Agatha and Peterson, she refers to him as Lucifer, and Peterson orders her and her husband never to return to his house. The mise-en-scène is strategically crafted to enhance the contradictory masculine identity of Peterson thereby enhancing his humiliation by the end of the scene. Peterson is smartly dressed in a black suit, standing in front of one of his cars with male servants within his reach ready to execute his commands. The eye of the camera leads Francis and Agatha looking extremely dejected walk into the compound. After a pretentious exchange of pleasantries, an argument ensues and Agatha calls Peterson Lucifer. Peterson's humiliation at being insulted is compounded by the fact that Francis and various members of Peterson's staff are present during the argument. He therefore feels it necessary to speak particularly rudely to Agatha, which angers Francis, who warns him never to speak that way to her again. When Francis and Agatha are gone,

Peterson still feels particularly insecure, and asks his servants' opinions on his physical appearance before leaving the house. In a subsequent incident with Francis, after Agatha's death, Peterson accuses him of killing Agatha in order to get even with him. Francis retorts by saying that he would not kill the mother of his children simply to retaliate against worthless garbage like Peterson. This shocks and angers Peterson, mostly because he realizes his own failure in winning Francis' approval. Peterson's violence continues more strongly after this event, as it does after similar events in which he fails to win the approval of other men in his social strata. As long as his expensive cars, clothing, and house cannot not validate his masculinity before his peers, he seeks alternative, often violent, means to do so. In essence, Peterson demonstrates that what "we call masculinity is often a hedge against being revealed as a fraud, an exaggerated set of activities that keep others from seeing through us, and a frenzied effort to keep at bay those fears within us" (Kimmel "Masculinity as Homophobia", 277). When Peterson realizes the limitation of his possessions in positioning him as a strong masculine figure, it becomes important for him to eliminate anyone who might expose his inner weakness. When he tells Francis that fear of himself is the beginning of wisdom, he takes a twist on a similar Bible verse: "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). In a desperate stretch for imagined power, he equates his position with that of God. He is constantly afraid that other men will "unmask [him], reveal to [him] and the world that

[he] does not measure up, that [he is] not a real [man]" (Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia", 277). As hard as Peterson tries to gain and maintain his masculine position, he fails to earn the endorsement of other men. These men can somehow read his life, see his weaknesses, and refuse to pay homage to him. Faced with this and the fear of being unmasked by either Francis or Alhaji, he feels the need to silence them both.

Aside from the fear of being exposed, Peterson's general helplessness and inability to solve particular problems contributes greatly to his violence. Every step he takes demonstrates his struggle to defend his feelings of helplessness. Despite the amount of wealth he commands, he still has low self esteem and he could not deal with others through non-violent means. Brown also clarifies that "the key psychological dynamic of violent behaviour is an unbearable experience of helplessness. Thus individual and systemic violence are closely linked and most inseparable" (5). This explanation is vital to understanding the role of the gun in this film, and in broader society. In *Time*, Peterson finds consolation in his gun, his only real means of bringing his adversaries to their knees. Gun possession is a masculine symbol in the film, and it is the masculine symbol of a global patriarchal culture. Gun possession is crucial to masculine identity in *Time* because whoever wields the gun is able to strike fear into his enemies; the weapon bestows masculinity on its possessor. Guns have been made a crucial part of masculine identity in many ethnic

communities. Chris Smith describes the gun as "the most potent symbol of conflict and violence in the closing years of the 20th century" (1). The advent of guns gave men the opportunity to hunt for game, which enabled them to provide for and protect their families. Tolley-Stokes notes that, "relying upon their proficiency with weapons, men gained public admiration for winning duels, while unlucky opponents were denounced for their cowardice upon their failure to meet the challenge" (365). Peterson uses his gun to eliminate Francis and Alhaji, both of whom raise their hands in surrender to the dictates of his violent masculinity before they are murdered. With his gun, Peterson is able to assume an unchallenged masculine supremacy; holding it, he walks with extreme confidence. The gun becomes a powerful symbol that bolsters his ego, a tool with which to tame other men, potential rivals. Francis' and Alhaji's departure allows for Peterson's uncontested position as the wealthiest member of the community.

However, as Peterson is aware of the power of the gun in the construction of his masculinity, he feels particularly vulnerable when confronted at home without his gun. Masculine posturing is for public display, and this pretension is often turned off at home. Men are therefore usually most vulnerable in their own homes. Just as Peterson did to both Francis and Alhaji, Amos pays Peterson a visit at his home, with the intent of avenging Francis' death. The scene is set in the night a replica of Amos's diabolical activities

discussed above. Amos holds a gun much larger than Peterson's own, and Peterson is rightfully in fear; he knows that he must now surrender to the authority of another man. He begs for his life, but Amos is no more forgiving of him than Peterson was of Francis or Alhaji. Amos takes his time to have a dialogue with Peterson an act specifically orchestrated to demonstrate that Amos is in charge of proceedings. Peterson is even prepared to relinquish his wealth—the last remaining component of his masculinity—but this has no effect, as Amos is already wealthy, and further wealth would not contribute much more to his own masculine status. Amos seeks Peterson's "soul" (his masculinity), which he effectively takes by killing Peterson's family. Clearly, the type of masculinity that Peterson sought to maintain is fragile and short-lived. True masculinity can be neither bought nor stolen. Unfortunately, the men in the film, and many in society, fail to realize that multiple hegemonic masculinities may exist simultaneously, and harmoniously. These men do not exhibit any form of gentility towards one another. Though they chase after wealth and power they find it impossible to defend themselves when in danger yet they keep using every opportunity they have to be aggressive and humiliate other men around them.

Peterson sees Francis as a threat, instead of a companion who might help him build his masculine identity. Alhaji betrays Peterson's trust by presenting him with false papers. The men treat one another with suspicion, and are

constantly on guard; it is no surprise that they are so quick to employ violence against one another with little provocation. As Kaufman explains, each corner of the triad feeds on each other, so men's violence against women occurs in connection with violence against other men, which leads to the internalization of violence – man's violence against himself.

Violence against Himself

In Kaufman's conception, man's violence against himself is carried out in construction of the male ego, an extension of Herbert Marcuse's "surplus aggression", defined as "the building of a precarious structure of internalised violence" (12). Man's violence against himself arises as a result of being denied the expression of emotions such as fear, pain, sadness, and embarrassment, which are connected to passivity. Kaufman makes the point that the "constant psychological and behavioural vigilance against passivity and its derivatives is a perpetual act of violence against oneself" (12). When Francis and his family move to the village, he begins to see himself as a worthless man because he cannot provide adequately for them. He sees their relocation to the village as a move backwards; the quiet village life is not for him, not the way to pursue his dreams (this view of village life actually reflects a view depicted by many Ghanaian filmmakers). In a scene in which Francis is shown on a farm, weeding with the rest of the family, he remarks in a soliloquy that life is no longer worth

living; the next scene shows him attempting to commit suicide. Francis' violence against himself arises from a sense of being unable to communicate his pain and his fears to anyone, including his wife – up to the point of his attempted suicide, he continues to act as though he is in control. Though he is in a fragile state, he attempts to maintain an outward toughness. Francis is not shown, up to this point in the film, to have any close friends on whom he can lean. The male characters he interacts with are either co-workers or his pastor. As Marilyn French writes, "men may have 'buddies,' acquaintances with whom they can engage in the ritual competition of banter, sport, or game, but they rarely possess intimate friends" (530). The absence of intimate friendships brings Francis to internalize his emotion. When the situation becomes overwhelming and he cannot find a means of escape, he feels that suicide is his only option. From this point forward, Francis' life begins to decline and is characterized by terrible emotional instability.

Francis' emotional distress continues even after he returns to the city and becomes rich again. Despite the money, cars, and other material possessions, Francis is lethargic and acts as though he were sick. He lives in fear that his wife's death will be questioned, and that it will eventually be avenged by Peterson. He begins to lie to those around him. During a visit to Amos' new apartment, Francis appears sick and does not return the enthusiasm with which Amos greets him. Amos wants Francis to approve of his new wealth, and so

Francis' cold behaviour is concerning to him. Francis reluctantly drinks the wine Amos offers, and for the first time confides in Amos, admitting that he is scared of Peterson.

Peterson's issues with Francis begin as a result of his envious considerations of Francis' wealth, which he finds threatening. Feelings of inferiority eventually lead to feelings of jealousy and anger, which contribute to his hostility. Psychoanalytic accounts suggest that aggressive behaviours may be inevitable when the psychological self feels threatened (Chodorow 241). When men fail to find a safe environment in which to express themselves, they suffer complex emotions that lead to anger and hostility; "part of that anger is directed at oneself in the form of guilt, self-hate and various physiological and psychological symptoms. Part is directed at other men. Part of it is directed at women" (Kaufman 12). Both Francis and Peterson regard the men around them as rivals; they do not see the potential for friendships. Their lives are dominated by their individual quests to defeat other men, so they lose sight of the benefits of companionship. This is true of many men:

> In modern competitive society, all men to some extent are seen as potential enemies. In school they are competitors. On the playing field they are competitors. After school hours they are potential aggressors. As we grow to adulthood, they confront us with their criticisms, with their maneuvering for positions in the hierarchies of power, money, celebrity, accomplishment, and conquest of women. (Miller 10-11)

Peterson seems particularly unable to communicate with others without attempting to assert his superiority over them. However, at the peak of his crime and hostility, he actually begins to feel quite guilty. Images of his dead sister haunt him; sometimes they appear transposed over his wife's face. He becomes generally fearful, on edge, paranoid. He runs when no one is chasing him, alarming his family with this and other strange behaviours. Peterson refuses to communicate with his wife, and becomes obsessed with eliminating men by whom he feels threatened. Rather than enjoying his wealth, he is consumed by guilt and general psychological instability.

The results of employing dishonest means to acquire their wealth are catastrophic to both Francis and Peterson. Fear and mental instability lead to their use of violence. In Francis' case, his son becomes a target as soon as the boy becomes suspicious of his father's diabolic actions.

Violence against Children

Violence against children is closely linked to violence against women, especially when women are the primary caregivers in the home. The violation of children and women is severe when their lives depend on abusive men. Women and children are often silenced because they occupy subordinate positions in the home, making it difficult for them to assert themselves against violent men. Children are particularly vulnerable in abusive homes: "it has become relatively

common to see the violation of children..." (Hearn 218). Children's (especially young children's) position is most delicate because of their dependence on adults for survival. Williams explains that children's subordinate positions are natural, but disadvantageous where violence is concerned:

> Some of the subordinate status flows naturally from children's helplessness at birth, long period of dependence on adult caregivers, and our need for a system that will assure adequate socialization of all of society's members. However, subordinate status works to the extreme disadvantage of the child in regard to family violence. (446)

The subordinate positions of women and children in many cultures and the fact that their lives are intertwined can make it difficult to prevent and measure the impact of violence. Children often experience extreme trauma because men's "violence to known women may be performed in the presence or hearing of children; it may involve direct violence to both the woman and the children..." (Hearn 219). Children's vulnerability is clearly demonstrated in *Time*, as Fred's suspicion of his father is threatening to his safety. As a child, he is not in a position to confront his father and demand answers. When he does finds out the father's malevolence and suggest, one day, that his father is an evil man, his father decides that he knows too much and must die. In an instant, Fred ceases to be Francis' son, and becomes yet another threat to his manhood. The brutal scene in which Francis' kills his son is one that exposes the hypocrisy of men. Though Francis had professed, in many instances, his love for his family, this

fails to hold true when his masculinity is at stake. After committing the original direct and indirect acts of violence against his wife, Francis restrains himself less, not hesitating to act violently whenever he feels threatened. Williams compares family violence to a web in which violence escalates over time:

> Family violence is often not discreet or one-time event but instead is embedded in a web of family relationships and behaviours. Each violent episode may build on past violent episodes or threats of violence. Over time, the perpetrator may go through periods in which he or she is less violent and periods when he or she is more violent. The violence may take a cyclical pattern, increase in severity over time, or follow no pattern at all. (443-444)

While killing his son is the first physical murder Francis commits, the foundation of violence is by this point well set. With Agatha's death, Fred and Sarafina live in an increased state of danger, as Francis, now a single parent becomes less and less stable. He spends little time with the children at home, and rarely takes them out. The children find themselves in a position where they can neither question their father's activities, nor prevent him from committing further violence against them. Fred is confused and does not know what to do; his faith in God is shaken, and he no longer accompanies Sarafina to church. He suspects some wrongdoing, but as a child finds it difficult to explore the situation. No dialogue on the subject is permitted in the house. The children effectively become prisoners in their own home, where the slightest violation of their father's rules can result in horrible consequences.

After Francis's death, Amos offers to take care of Sarafina, but she eventually becomes a target of his violence. Children are already especially vulnerable without their parents, but this vulnerability is heightened when there is added incentive to do harm to them. The priest at the shrine, for example, demands that occult sacrifices be made only with women or children. Children are reduced to the status of objects, to be used in any way necessary to sustain one's masculinity. Of course, violence begets violence, and as Hearn points out, as men perform violence their threshold for it is elevated:

> As men do more violence, they are able to diminish previous violences, in terms of both their impact and their recognition. [. . .] As men do more violence, their threshold of what counts as violence is raised. With more violence, it becomes more taken-for-granted as part of their ordinary life rather than as something exceptional. (202-203)

This passage is accurately descriptive of the lives of Francis, Peterson and Amos. Francis and Amos both progress in their violence to the point where they are willing to kill children. After Amos kills a pregnant woman, killing becomes a way of life for him. He drives to a residential area one day and kidnaps a ten year old boy, who sells water in the vicinity, and kills him. Each of Amos' atrocities is carried out with more ease than the last. When he learns that Peterson murdered Francis, he arms himself without hesitation and confronts Peterson at home. Before he leaves for Peterson's residence, though, he audibly identifies himself as "Amos the Punisher." As his threshold for

violence has increased, he not only kills Peterson, but his wife and daughter as well, despite the small-to-nonexistent threat posed by these two. Perhaps in Amos' mind, the extra murders are legitimate, as they are committed in the spirit of avenging Francis' death. He boasts of the ease with which he has become able to commit murder, and soon after killing Peterson and his family, begins searching for his next sacrifice.

Amos, Peterson and Francis commit numerous murders between them, each more effortlessly and guiltlessly than the last. This issue has been dubbed the "moving threshold of violence" (Hearn, 203). It is apparent that their focus is more on pride, and less on the ramifications of their deeds, but the larger question is whether they are fully conscious of their actions. Hearn argues that there would be no need for violence if men had complete supremacy, but as absolute dominance is impossible, men use violence to (re)assert their masculinity. The men in *Time* are determined to assume hegemonic masculine positions, irrespective of consequences of the actions required to do so.

The Fragility of Masculinity

The wickedness of these men cannot be overemphasized. While they portray themselves as individuals with valid reasons for their actions (and perhaps they believe this themselves), their violence cannot be justified. The question one must ask is why are these men so wicked, despite their privileged position in

society? Peterson has considerable wealth and material possessions, yet is not content. Similarly, a businessman in the film *Accra Killings* is also quite wealthy but was not satisfied with his riches, as others in the city were richer than him. In the video film, the god Zeus cautions the business man against this dissatisfaction. A politician in the same film is already in power but demands more, to be able to rule the people indefinitely. One common factor in the characters of each of these men is their insecurity regarding their masculinity, which leads them to seek harmful alternative means to construct it. Despite traditional masculine advantages, they are not at peace within themselves. Kaufman explains:

> Masculinity is power. But masculinity is terrifying fragile because it does not really exist in the sense we are led to think it exists; that is as a biological reality—something real that we have inside ourselves. It exists in ideology; it exists as scripted behaviour; it exists within gendered relationships. [. . .] The presence of a penis and testicles is all it takes. Yet boys and men harbour great insecurity about their male credentials. This insecurity exists because maleness is equated with masculinity; but the latter is a figment of our collective patriarchal surplus—repressive imaginations. (7)

This fragility of masculinity is exhibited repeatedly in video films depicting the wealthiest male characters as the principal culprits. Though these men have ample material wealth, their masculine status must be continually validated and defended. Each principal male character in *Time* goes to great, often violent, lengths to protect and construct his masculinity. To these men, outwitting one

another in business and outdoing one another in public defines their masculinity. Kaufman suggests that "in a patriarchal society, being male is highly valued, and men value their masculinity. But everywhere there are ambivalent feelings. [...] Although maleness and masculinity are highly valued, men are everywhere unsure of their own masculinity and maleness, whether consciously or not" (7-8).

The instability of masculinity and the risks that come with it prevent men from enjoying their wealth and positions of privilege. They are continually exploring new means by which to validate their masculinities. For instance, when Amos is asked at the shrine to kill a pregnant woman, he pretends to be insane in order to subdue his victim without arousing suspicion of his motives. He is prepared to become mad—that is, to assume the most basic of masculine emotional positions—in order to assert his hegemonic masculine status. To achieve success in maintaining one's dominant masculine position occasionally demands that men perform acts of marginalized or subordinate masculinities, synonymous with the distinction between their public versus private lives. This is supportive of Kaufman's argument that masculinity is simply a figment of our imaginations. Susan Bordo's observation regarding the difference between the penis and the phallus may be applicable here, since men's idea about the phallus, which is equivalent to masculinity, is also a figment of their imagination and not an actual body part (104).

Conclusion

Various forms of men's violences are socially accepted, even sanctioned. Kaufman argues that historically industrial societies have shaped themselves through exploitation of the weaker nations; he cites colonialism and slavery as examples. He further points out that the demand for development encourages violence against the environment. Both human beings and machines are engaged in torturing the environment, exposing workers to dangerous chemicals and muscle strain. Racism, sexism, and heterosexualism are other forms of violent institutions in society in which men play active roles. As Kaufman observes, "our cities, our social structure, our work life, our relation with nature, our history, are more than a backdrop to the prevalence of violence. They are violence; violence in an institutionalised form encoded into physical structures and socio-economic relations" (5), and men are the principals of these violent institutions. Arthur Brittan suggests that the celebration of man as hero, hunter, competitor and conqueror is transferred into other modern phases of life, in the factory and the office (77). It is therefore not surprising that "it is mainly young men who are recruited into jobs that require the use of force: police, the military, private security, and blue-collar crime. And it is mainly young women who are recruited into jobs that repair the consequences of violence: nursing, psychology, and social work" (Connell *Gender*, 3). A fair example of this in *Time* is when angry board members send

armed police to Francis' home to arrest him, with force if necessary – some of these men assume positions of violence by choice; others do so to earn a living.

Further, the breadwinner position that men so love to occupy causes them to seek great success in their violent endeavours. Before Amos becomes rich, for example, he feels unmasculine for failing to provide a life of affluence for his family. He is further led to believe this social fabrication when he sees Francis displaying his wealth. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Amos seizes the first opportunity at becoming rich through violence. *Time* effectively demonstrates the intricacies and interconnectedness of violent behaviour.

Brittan remarks that "the main actors in history were men, they were conquerors, the explorers, the soldiers, the statesmen, the inventors; it was they who risked their capital on the market and stoked up engines of economic development" (80). Chodorow argues for the social and biological determinants of male behaviour; both individual and collaborative violence is generally the work of men:

> Historically and cross culturally, they make war. Men are soldiers and as politicians and generals, those which instigate and lead the fighting. Men also engage in extreme violence: they are (mainly) the concentration camp guards, the SS, those who perpetrate genocide, mass ethnic rape, pogroms, torture, and the murder of children and old people. Hormones, the structure of masculine personality, and/or the social political organization by gender, male bonding, and male dominance, all lead many men to react to threats with violence and aggression in a way that most women do not. (251-252)

Chodorow's assertion suggests that men are set by nature to react violently to the circumstances of life. Certainly, this was the path of each major male character in *Time*. In the film, manhood is culturally defined through its link to dominance and toughness, where men maintain their position in society thorough aggression. Those engaged in violence seem simply to be acting out the expectations of masculine subculture. Characters such as the bodyguards that surround Peterson and the policemen that arrest Francis must normally undergo training programs that promote aggressive, "masculine" behaviour. As man is constantly positioned in environments that expose him to violence, and as he seeks to construct his masculinity, it is not shocking that violence often "[becomes] a way of claiming or asserting masculinity..." (Connell *Gender*, 44).

Time explicitly presents performance for other men as the main reason for men's violence against women, children, themselves, and other men. Lahoucine Ouzgane's observation about men in the Middle East and North Africa is also applicable to Ghanaian men from West Africa. He thoughtfully argues that:

> . . . contrary to Western discourses that posit "woman" as the other of "man", in Muslim cultures, the opposite of masculinity is not necessarily femininity and that even misogyny is not the core of masculinity: the homosocial competition and the violent hierarchies structuring the relationships between men themselves constitute the core of what it means to be a man in the Middle East and North Africa. Because women are not the centre of men's experiences (other men are), misogyny is

> actually fuelled by something deeper—by the fear of emasculation by other men, the fear of being not so manly. ("The Rape Continuum")

Time shows that women are neither the perpetrators of violence, nor are they (in this culture) related to the reason why men perform violent acts. Violence is primarily the means by which men prove themselves to other men. With consideration to all of the violences perpetrated by men in the film, it is obvious that other men, not women, are the centre of men's activities in Ghanaian culture. The fear of being exposed by other men is their driving force for violence. By the end of the film all of the major male characters are violently killed, signifying the fragility and absurdity of violent masculinity. Similar significances can be found in other popular Ghanaian media; male psychic tension and masculine violence are common themes.

CONCLUSION

> *History and tradition in Africa, and particularly in African cinema, are equivalent not of oak trees, but grasslands; they provide sustenance for a way of life, but they also spread across the land in a complex, interwoven pattern. This complexity allows for movement, for change.* (Gabriel X)

> *Ideologies of masculinity – like those of femininity – are culturally and historically constructed, their meanings continually contested and always in the process of being renegotiated in the context of existing power relations.* (Miescher & Lindsay 4)

Having explored different aspects of the performance of men and masculinities in the previous chapters, this concluding chapter re-visits some of the main arguments in this dissertation. This is to help clarify the various components of the discussions explored in the various chapters. As pointed out in the introduction, filmmakers in Ghana have been actively involved in the creation of modern Ghanaian masculinities through various genres of video films produced since the advent of video films in the country. They are vigorously engaged in representing the culture and history on the screen. There are several instances in the video films where reality and fiction have been amalgamated, making art a true reflection of life. Ghanaian video filmmakers borrow images from the past to tell stories in the present, often projecting them into the future. In light of the point that Teshome H. Gabriel notes in his "Foreword" to Ukadike's *Questioning African Cinema: Conversations with Filmmakers* that African cinema links both the past and the future of Africa. These filmmakers give their stories a nonlinear structure in order to make the connection meaningful

bringing the past to bear heavily upon the present. As a result, the past, present, and future are intertwined—with the past sometimes inherent in the present and vice versa. Gabriel also observes that the kind of stories African films tell and the way filmmakers present them enable the stories to have many underlying threads and strands which make them not follow a single path. The intermingling of divergent patterns creates a tapestry which makes it possible to visually see the interaction between the past and the present which together produce a foreshadowing of the future. As he rightly puts it: "Nothing in African cultures can be seen simply as separate from the whole, from the larger patterns. Every image is part of a larger story, a larger film in the making (x).

The stories African films tell are not only aimed at repeating old myths and folklore but also collectively become part and parcel of attempts at mythmaking. Thus, the filmmakers are actively involved in recycling old stories into new ones. Ghanaian filmmakers accurately reflect Gabriel's assertion. The stories they tell are often based on indigenous culture, folklore, events in the colonial past, and the realities of current postcolonial Ghana. The stories are embellished with metaphors, euphemisms, symbols, and analogies. They directly or indirectly address both political and social issues. Sometimes the stories actively participate in reinventing history and promoting a new public culture (as in the case of hallelujah video films discussed in chapter 2). This is the point Barber also makes when she asserts that the "arts which are both

produced and consumed locally seem to have a better claim to speak with the authentic voice of the people" (24). Although many interpretations and ideologies are explored in these video films, the multiple points of reference are connected and they reveal to viewers the important issues that are prevalent in society. Gabriel compares history and tradition in Africa with the grassland which provides sustenance and a way of life in a complex interwoven pattern. The complexity makes change possible and also makes it possible for tradition destroyed in one instance to re-emerge from a different dimension. African culture survived the test of time and African cinema takes its strength from this network of traditions. The stories do not only aim at providing entertainment, they also teach moral lessons. This resonates with traditional storytelling, the concert party, popular fiction, and highlife music that always teach a moral lesson.

A careful examination of the stories of Ghanaian video films reveals the social placement and the performance of masculinities. As Stoltenberg notes, we all discover how to locate a suitable niche within the gender system through life narratives. Our perceptions about gender and our role in it came as a result of "stories and dramas in which we were shown our part and how to play it" (*The End of Manhood* XI). The learning process was interactive as we are aware of the consequences of our performances whether good or bad. Thus, to examine men and masculinities in Ghanaian video films, I embarked on

reading the narratives of the everyday life of the men featured in the films. The gender theory within this work is embedded and sometimes spontaneous. My focus was on how the selected video films represent and reproduce the various masculinities and the kinds of messages that are disseminated about Ghanaian men and masculinities.

The selected video films discussed emphasize the different versions of masculinities emerging with the modern working class. I argued that masculinity in the city is constructed around competition and that this becomes central to the behaviors and emotions around which the city man revolves. This competitive nature of men reinforces authority and independence. The representation of the Ghanaian man in the video films is entrenched within specific ideologies of gender, sexuality, and class. The discussion of men and masculinities in this project shows that masculinity is not a prescribed biological requirement which cuts across individuals genetically categorized as "male". Instead my awareness of the term "masculinity" or what it means to be a man in Ghana is a "constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our relationships with ourselves ,with each other, and with our world" (Kimmel 120). It is therefore more appropriate to speak of masculinities emphasizing the presence of multiple representations and constructions of "maleness".

I have emphasized throughout this project that the discourse of masculinity around the man who provides bread for the family emerged as the dominant form of masculinity. Ko Kuma and Efo in Chapter One exert considerable authority over their families due to the fact that they are the breadwinners of their families. While it is obvious such dominant masculinity may have the utmost ideological power, this power is not absolute in every situation. Instead, this makes way for a convoluted means by which the dominant discourse interconnect and interrelate with other forms of masculinities in different ways. This brings to focus the interactions between sons and fathers in *Tribal War 1 & 2*, which emphasizes the place of the father in the lives of male children. Within the context of the Ghanaian video films, the various masculinities—both dominant and subordinate—shape one another by reason of cultural, economic, political, and social structures and practices.

Each chapter demonstrates that economic factors largely determine a man's masculine status in society. Consequently, this ideology equates masculinity with the public space (work) while femininity is relegated to the private space (domestic). The two sides of the binary within the ideological structure are linked through heterosexual marriage. Thus, it is the notion of the adult man, married with a child who is socially responsible to be the provider, protector, and head of the household. This ideology has relegated women to

the home where they are solely responsible for household chores while men enjoy free domestic service.

Beginning with the first video film I examined, *Tribal War 1&2*, it is clear that the home is the woman's sole preserve. The men featured in the film do not attempt to do any domestic chores. All the married women are seen performing domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare. Even Owusu, who demonstrates qualities of a participant father in *Tribal War 2*, is never presented performing domestic chores. In Chapter Two, I discussed Mr. and Mrs. Olu in *The Broken Wall*. Both have lucrative employment; Mr. Olu is a publisher and Mrs. Olu is a real estate agent. Yet, she is responsible for all domestic chores. It is possible that Mr. Olu does not know the real purpose of the kitchen in his home because he uses it only as a point of entrance and exit. Among all the fathers studied in this project, Mr. Olu is the ideal father figure. He creates a balance between home, work, and church. But doing house work is not included in his role as a father. In the third chapter, based on *Idols of Heart*, we encounter Chief Robertson offering to prepare chocolate drink for himself and Thelma, his wife; Thelma vigorously protests, saying that it is not proper for him to do so. Chief Robertson is surprised at his wife's reaction and demands to know if it is wrong for a man to take on such a role in the privacy of his own home. In this video film, the gender roles are rigidly structured such that crossing the boundaries between them means deviation from the norm. Both

men and women resist the violation of these roles. Chapter Four, which is based on *Time,* also provides an image of domestic labour as the woman's responsibility. In the films, even though women sometimes work outside and support the family financially, their role as breadwinners is not validated. The women sustain and support the binary roles prescribed by the society

The above snapshots from the sample video films represent the situation in many Ghanaian video films where women do all the housework. Men are always placed in privileged positions and, though women sometimes complain that men do not help enough, they act in ways that support the idea that housework is not a man's responsibility. C.K. Brown observes that the workload on Ghanaian women is far more than that of their male counterparts. Women's responsibilities include cooking, childcare, fetching water and fuel wood, and washing. Brown also points out that, on average, women spend twenty hours per week on house work while men spend five hours per week (Brown 30-31). François' study of sixty women in Osu, a suburb of Accra, shows that women spend ten hours daily on household chores. Discussing the roles of men and women in Ghanaian homes, Augustine Ankomah states:

> Given that the early socialization process is modelled along distinct sex roles, every Ghanaian grows up with the knowledge that it is the woman who cooks, does the washing up and the laundry, and indeed is responsible for all household chores. Notwithstanding her level of education, profession, schedule of work, a woman does not expect her husband to share in household chores. A few men in highly educated homes may occasionally assist their wives in the kitchen, but many will

> abandon whatever they are doing when there is a knock at the door, for it is considered disgraceful for outsiders, especially from the man's family, to find a man engrossed in feminine roles such as cooking or washing up. (*International Encyclopedia*)

In *Idols of Heart*, Thelma vehemently opposes Chief Robertson because she believes it is her duty to take care of all domestic chores. His proposition to make a chocolate drink is a slap in the wife's face because if any outsider observes the scenario, the woman's integrity as a virtuous wife will be questioned.

Ghanaian video filmmakers are thereby, actively involved in the re-production and reinforcing traditional gender roles. Since the majority of filmmakers are men, they continue to perpetuate the traditional roles of the sexes. Women are constantly positioned in the home, while men perform outside the home. A majority of the women featured in the films endorse the traditional roles assigned to the sexes and they rigidly enforce that tradition with their female children.

Ghanaian video filmmakers justify inequalities in the performance of household chores by portraying women as housewives. Except for Mrs. Olu in *The Broken Wall,* all the women featured in the video films discussed in this dissertation are housewives. Even Mrs. Olu, who works outside the home, is not represented as someone who makes a financial contribution to the upkeep of the house. Contrary to the message in the video films, Ghanaian women

contribute significantly to family finances (Ahenkora 1991, Brown 1996, Burkh 1979, Oduro 1992). Women spend a sizeable portion of their income for the upkeep of their households. Apusigah complains that Ghanaian women occupy a contradictory position in the home. They are viewed as the keepers of the home and appear to assume a position of authority but their services in the home are undervalued and not rewarded. Having a good home contributes significantly to a man's social status since that signifies his ability to run his house well. Men receive good commendation for having a well run home; however, it takes a lot of female sacrifices to make a house a home. Apusigah observes that "being a good wife or mother has meant the setting aside of personal interests, self-fulfillment goals, and career aspirations in order to concentrate on the needs of the family, real or imagined" (13). I pointed out in Chapter One how men who believe in the ideology of different social spheres for male and female exploit women's labour. The girl child is raised to aspire to a career that will help her to support the man in her life while the boy child is encouraged to aspire to occupy the best position in the public domain as well as to become the head of his household. This brings into focus Johnson's argument about fatherhood and housework:

> Regardless of which era of fatherhood we look at, patriarchy shapes it to overlook the daily job of taking care of children, of cleaning up, watching, soothing, worrying, disciplining, transporting here and there, being constantly on call, and generally keeping track of who's where and doing what. Patriarchal fatherhood overlooks such domestic work

> because domestic work is culturally devalued labour that men typically regard as beneath them because it does nothing to enhance or preserve status. (199)

Women's commitment to housework does not make them self-sufficient because domestic labour is not considered to have a direct impact on society; "it produces nothing" (Beauvoir 456). The woman is therefore dependent on her husband and children and her life is judged through them. Beauvoir further complains that in the lives of the husband and children the woman "is only an inessential intermediary" (456). A consequence of relegating domestic work and childcare to women is a lack of emotional connection between men and their families. A man is placed on a pedestal where he is featured as the breadwinner and protector of the family, hence cleaning and childcare are below his status. Because men are traditionally regarded as the economic providers of the home, filmmakers always use men's career as an excuse to justify men's lack of involvement in domestic chores.

The common denominator in the various chapters points to what it means to be a man or masculine in Ghanaian society. Discussing rural fathers in Chapter One reveals that having absolute authority over one's family is a means by which fathers define their masculinity. Creating the balance between the domestic and public spaces enable Mr. Olu in Chapter Two to discharge his responsibilities as the head of the household. Mr. Olu's good qualities as the

ideal masculine figure resonates from the fact that he is a born again Christian. The sexual deficiency of Chief Robertson in Chapter Three overshadows his affluence thereby rendering him effeminate. Though wealth is a sign of masculinity, Chief Robertson's life demonstrates that wealth alone does not confer masculinity. The elements that define masculinity do not always complement each other; they sometimes produce internal contradictions which leave men confused. The discussion about sexuality shows that it is expedient for men to create a balance in their sexual activities in order not to incur the displeasure of society. In order to outwit one another, the men featured in Chapter Four resort to gruesome acts of violence to assert their masculinities. The discussions in every chapter reveal that biological factors alone do not make men; instead, men are social constructions who perform according to the dictates of society. This project buttresses the fact that definitions of masculinities are not uniform, since masculinity is not monolithic and no particular definition of masculinity is applicable to all Ghanaian men. I showed how the films attempt to make sense of men's actions in specific circumstances that arise from their positions in the home as sons, husbands and fathers.

The deliberations in all the chapters demonstrate that masculinities in Ghanaian video films are constructed in so many sites; especially at home and work. I argued that the construction of men's adult masculinity does not end with marriage but masculinity is a journey without a feasible end. It is actively

being negotiated and renegotiated, constructed and reconstructed. The multiple areas in which men are required to perform masculinity makes masculinity a rather slippery, unstable and hugely contradictory.

One word that comes to mind after examining the images of men in Ghanaian video films is power. Men are portrayed as always in pursuit of accumulating power. The case of Peterson and Francis examined in Chapter Four makes this point clear. The quest for undue power over others leads men to commit violence against women, children, other men, and themselves. As such, the day-to-day life of the men featured in the video films show that being a man is not always about being on top all the time. It is not always about being the undisputed winner and the strongest. Rather, it is about knowing how to lose, and giving in to a stronger force. Mr. Olu's adultery with Ama—in Chapter Two—reveals that even the strongest of men have weaknesses. Men who fail to recognize that it is alright to lose sometimes, expose themselves to atrocities that destroy them. The representations of men and masculinities in Ghanaian video films reveal that it is important for men to negotiate between orders given and orders taken.

Some of the issues raised may seem obvious, usual, and predictable, but when "we think we know what we are seeing, however, we often stop looking carefully and stop noticing what is extraordinary" (Townsend 1). The video films examined in this project were carefully selected to investigate the common

and mostly taken-for-granted aspects of masculinity that are prevalent in the films. The materials presented here are not exhaustive because they look specifically at men in heterosexual marital relationships. However, it is my hope that this project contributes to contemporary debates about men, especially Ghanaian men, and the different notions of masculinities in Ghana.

The regional boundaries and the diversities existing on the continent of Africa make it imperative that studies of men and masculinities focus on specific countries, languages, and tribes to avoid generalizations. African men clearly do not belong to a homogeneous group. My project addressed this issue by discussing men and masculinities in Ghana, a subject that has so far received scant attention. This project contributes to the studies of men and masculinity in Africa by drawing attention to how Ghanaian video film industry depicts and constructs gendered discourses. This project draws attention to the different forms of masculinities expressed in the video films by investigating how masculinity is connected to gender disparity and how masculinities are performed in these video films.

The various chapters bridge the gap between examinations of men and gender studies and demonstrate how gender relations are produced and transformed in Ghanaian video films. The discussions reveal that gender issues are of paramount concern in Ghanaian society and they are not restricted to women. The way stories are told in Ghanaian video films draws attention to the

different ideological discourses and the socio-political dynamics influencing the productions of cultures. The primary reason why filmmakers engage in their productions is to make money; audiences on the other hand want to be entertained as well as receive some form of education through the films. Any film that fulfils the entertainment and education values is often guaranteed spontaneous success. The filmmakers thereby make sure that their films appeal to the audience by recycling popular issues that are relevant to the populace. Ukadike observes that since the emergence of Africa cinema, African themes have been dominant in the narrative patterns of African films. Such themes have brought to light some of the contradictions between African and Western values. Unfortunately, African cinema failed to produce and sustain a viable industry. Learning from this bizarre scenario, video filmmakers "have turned to local but universalised themes which, when rendered in drama and comedy, allow the video-film to draw huge crowds in the movie theatres, more so than its predecessor, the African celluloid film" (Ukadike 248). These video film makers have been able to navigate their way in which they have been able to create their own audiences -something the African celluloid film could not achieve. The success of the video films is evidenced in the way Ghanaian's taste for foreign films have dwindled over the years.

By drawing attention to popular views expressed on men and masculinities in Ghanaian video films, this project points to issues that are

prevalent in society and how filmmakers take advantage of popular rumours to create their production because these video films "are actually providing the means and critical methods for re-examining consciences through popular culture. It has also become a medium that compels people to accept criticism of their traditions and to laugh at themselves while at the same time being entertained" (Ukadike 257). This dissertation does not attempt to redefine masculinity but contains specific studies on how Ghanaian masculinities are constructed in the video films by focusing on the importance of masculinities to the social transformation of modern Ghana. The project thereby, widens debates about gender and encourages a rethinking of Ghanaian masculinities and ways of being a man.

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Accra Killings, Video, (VCD), 91 Minutes, Colour, English; Written by Jojo Richardson, Directed by George Arcton-Tettey, and Produced by G.K Quansah.

Babina I, Video, (VHS), 102 Minutes, Colour, English; Directed & Produced Akwetey-Kanyi, Accra: 2000

The Broken Wall, Video, (VHS), 117 Mins, Colour, English; Written and Produced by Christyn Agwu Michaels, Directed by Sammy O. Agwu, Produced by HM Films, Accra: 1996.

A Call at Midnight Video (VHS), 117 Mins, Colour, English; Written by Sam Nai & Veronica Quashie, Directed by Veronica Quashie, Produced by Princess Film Production, Accra: 2001.

Dabi Dabi I Video (VHS), 89 Minutes, Colour English & Twi, 2002; *Dabi Dabi II* Video (VHS), 83 Minutes, Colour, English & Twi, 2002; *Dabi Dabi III* video (VHS), 79 Minutes, Colour, English & Twi, 2003; all Written by James Aboagye and Edward Frimpong, Directed by Kenny McCauley, Produced: Miracle Films Production, Accra.

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Stolen Bible 1, Video, (VHS), 84 Minutes, Colour, English; *Stolen Bible II,* Video, (VHS), 99 Minutes, Colour, English; Written, Directed, & Produced by Augustine Abbey, Accra: Great Idikoko Ventures, 2001.

Time Video, (VHS), 100 Minutes, Colour, English; Written by Godwin John & Willy Ajenge, Directed by Ifeanyi Onyeabor, Produced by E. Dugbartey Nanor, Accra: 2000.

Tribal War I. Video (VHS) 99 Minutes, Colour, English, Ewe, & Twi; 2002; *Tribal War II* (VHS) 113 Minutes, Colour, English, Ewe, & Twi; 2003 both Written, Directed, and Produced by Samuel Nyamekye. Accra: Rabi Videos.

Web, (VHS), Video, 96 Minutes, Writer, Director, and Produced by Zack Orji Accra: Alexiboat Productions, 2000.

Yaa Asantewaa I, (VHS) Video, 106 Minutes, Colour, English & Twi; Written, Directed, and Produced by Harry Laud Accra: Harry Laud Harry Productions 2002.